THE ORTHODOX PILGRIM

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Hieromonk Seraphim Of Platina

Archbishop Averky

His Significance For The Ecumenical Orthodox Church

The Orthodox Word, Volume 17, Nos. 100 & 101, 1981, pp. 219–26

"Alas! His golden lips have been silenced!"

Too often have we Orthodox Christians grown used to "taking for granted" the great men in our midst, of not valuing them as we ought until they have departed from us—and even then not evaluating them properly, and letting their significance and their teaching slip away from us into oblivion.

Archbishop Averky was one of the last giants of 20th-century Orthodoxy, not merely of the Russian Church Outside of Russia, or even of Russian Orthodoxy—but of the whole of the 20th-century Orthodox Church.

Born Alexander Pavlovich Taushev on October 19 (Nov. 1) 1906, in Kazan, Archbishop Averky was of a noble family. His father was a government official whose duties took him to many parts of Russia, allowing young Alexander to have a first-hand acquaintance with the heart of Holy Russia, its monasteries and holy places; the memory of these places remained with him all his life, even though he left his homeland while still a young teenager. Even at that tender age he was attracted to books of a spiritual nature, such as *Unseen Warfare*, and already from the age of seven or eight he began to feel an alienation from the ordinary life of the world and a subconscious attraction towards the monastic life.

In the midst of the civil war that followed on the Revolution of 1917, the Taushev family left Russia, in 1920, with great grief of soul. The family settled in the Bulgarian city of Varna, where Alexander attended school until 1926. The chief religious influence for him at this time was the local parish church and its priest, Father John Slunin.

Then, in 1925, a bishop came to Varna who was to give Alexander's life its direction: Archbishop Theophan of Poltava, a strict monk, a man of prayer, and theologian in the true Patristic tradition. After meeting him, the young student resolved to undertake the monastic way of life. With Archbishop Theophan's blessing, he attended the Theological Faculty of the University of Sophia, and on graduating from it with brilliant success in 1930 he went to Carpatho-Russia (in Czechoslovakia) with the intention of becoming a monk and serving the Russian Church. Tonsured a monk there in 1931, and ordained priestmonk the next year, he served several parishes and assisted the abbot of the monastery of St. Nicholas near the village of Iza. Soon he also undertook responsibilities as editor of the diocesan periodical and teacher of catechism in secondary schools.

When Carpatho-Russia was occupied by the Magyars in 1940, Father Averky went to Belgrade and served under Metropolitan Anastassy, Chief Hierarch of the Russian Church Abroad, conducting courses in religious subjects both for seminarians and laymen.

When the Synod of Bishops moved to Munich in 1945, he followed it and continued his work of the religious education of youth. In 1950 he was appointed by the Synod as chairman of its Missionary Education Committee. When he came to America in 1951 he was invited to the newly-organized Holy Trinity Seminary at Jordanville, New York, to teach New Testament, Liturgics, and Homiletics. In 1952 he became Rector of the Seminary, in 1953 Bishop of Syracuse, and in 1960, at the death of Archbishop Vitaly, Abbot of Holy Trinity Monastery. In these positions he continued until his death his life's work of enlightening the Orthodox faithful, both the future pastors of the seminary (about 100 priests came from the seminary in these years) and all those who read the Monastery's publications, which were all solid works of Orthodox piety and theology. His sermons appeared frequently in the Monastery's bimonthly publication, *Orthodox Russia*, and his own books included textbooks on Homiletics and the interpretation of the New Testament (2 volumes), collections of his sermons and articles, and works on the life and letters of his beloved Abba, Archbishop Theophan.

All of the writings of Archbishop Averky bear one and the same character of love for God's truth, righteous zeal in expressing it, and urgent exhortation to others to follow it.

The abundance with which his golden lips gushed the sweet honey of the pure teaching of Orthodoxy, especially in his most fruitful last years, has perhaps helped to hide from us the rarity and even uniqueness of his teaching in our evil days. We have grown so used to his flaming and bold words that we have not noticed that he was virtually the only hierarch of any Orthodox church writing in any language with such boldness and uprightness in defense of Orthodoxy.

In earlier centuries the Church had many Holy Fathers writing in defense of Orthodoxy against the numerous heresies which attacked her singly or together. But in our day, when Orthodox Christians are losing the savor of Orthodoxy and virtually all the Local Orthodox Churches are giving in to the apostasy of our times, his voice was almost the only one to continue speaking the truth with such vigor and boldness, even amid the many infirmities of his old age. Truly, he was a champion of Orthodoxy in our age when faith is growing cold.

His view of the contemporary world was sober, precise, and entirely inspired by the Sacred Scripture and Holy Fathers of the Church: He taught that we live in the age of the Apostasy, the falling away from true Christianity, when the "mystery of iniquity" has entered its final stage of preparation for the "man of sin," Antichrist (II Thes. 2:3-12[1]). Archbishop Averky traced the development of this Apostasy in particular from the time of the schism of the Church of Rome (1054 AD), through the era of Humanism, the Renaissance and Reformation, the French Revolution, 19th-century materialism and communism, culminating in the Russian Revolution of 1917, which removed the last great barrier to the working of the mystery of iniquity and the coming of Antichrist. (See his book, *True Orthodoxy and the Contemporary World*, Jordanville, 1971, pp. 18–21; the quotes that follow are all from this book).

In such an age, he writes, "to be a true Orthodox Christian, ready unto death to preserve one's faithfulness to Christ the Saviour, in our days is much more difficult than in the first centuries of Christianity" (p. 17). Although often open (in the lands under communist control), the persecution against Christianity today is more often hidden. "Under the covering of a deceptive outward appearance that looks good and leads many into error, in actuality there is occurring everywhere today a *hidden* persecution against Christianity... This persecution is much more dangerous and frightful than the previous open persecution, for it threatens a complete devastation of souls—spiritual death" (18). He often quoted the words of St. Theophan the Recluse about the latter times: "Although the name of Christian will be heard everywhere, and everywhere there will be churches and church services, all this will be only an appearance, while within there will be a true apostasy" (21).

In fulfillment of these words in our own days, Archbishop Averky writes, "The Christian world, it is frightful to say, presents today a frightful, cheerless picture of the most profound religious and moral decadence" (22). The temptation of worldly comfort and prosperity drive God away from the soul. "The servants of antichrist more than anything else strive to force God out of the life of men, so that men, satisfied with their material comfort, might not feel any need to turn to God in prayer, might not remember God, but might live as though He did not exist. Therefore, the whole order of today's life in the so-called 'free' countries, where there is no open bloody persecution against faith, where everyone has the right to believe as he wishes, is an even greater danger for the soul of a Christian (than open persecution), for it chains him entirely to the earth, compelling him to forget about heaven. The whole of contemporary 'culture,' directed to purely earthly attainments and the frantic whirlpool of life bound up with

1 Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.
II Thes. 2:1-12

2 And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint; Saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man: And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; Yet because this widow

it, keeps a man in a constant state of emptiness and distraction which give no opportunity for one to go at least a little deeper into his soul, and so the spiritual life in him gradually dies out" (29). All of contemporary life, on the public level, is a preparation for the coming of Antichrist: "All that is happening today on the highest level of religion, government, and public life ... is nothing else than an intense work of preparation by the servants of the coming Antichrist for his future kingdom" (24), and this work is being done as much by "Christians" as by non-Christians (18).

After painting such a grim picture of the present and future, Archbishop Averky calls on Orthodox Christians to struggle against the spirit of this world that lies in evil. "All who in the present day desire to preserve faithfulness to Christ the Saviour must guard themselves especially against every attraction towards earthly goods and against being deceived by them. It is extremely dangerous to give oneself over to every desire to make a career for oneself, to make a name for oneself, to obtain authority and influence in society, to acquire wealth, to surround oneself with luxury and comfort" (28).

To those willing to struggle to preserve their faith, Archbishop Averky offers a sober and inspiring path of confession: "Now is the *w*—of a firm standing, if need be even to death, for one's Orthodox faith, which is being subjected everywhere to open and secret attacks, oppression, and persecution on the part of the servants of the coming Antichrist" (28). We must be true Christians, not given in to the spirit of the times, making the Church the center of our lives (26). Giving thanks to God for the existence of our Russian Church Outside of Russia, "which has not tainted itself by submitting to the dark powers of Antichrist that are acting in the contemporary world" (24), we must be "its faithful and devoted children, and at the same time its missionaries, fighters for the true faith of Christ, both in the non-Orthodox environment that surrounds us and among the Russian people who have fallen away or are falling away from it" (27). We must lead a conscious life of prayer, nourished by the reading of Scripture and the Holy Fathers and by frequent confession and reception of Holy Communion (30).

The path ahead of us, despite the deceptive promises of modern "progress," is a path of suffering: "The Lord has clearly said that it is not 'progress' that awaits us, but ever greater tribulations and misfortunes as a result of the increase of lawlessness and the growing cold of love; when He comes, He will scarcely find faith on earth (Luke 18:8)[2]."

The strength of the true Christian in the terrible times ahead is the apocalyptic expectation of the Second Coming of Christ: "The spirit of a constant expectation of the Second Coming of Christ is the original Christian spirit, which cries out in prayer to the Lord: *Even so, come, Lord Jesus* (Apoc. 22:20)[3]. And the spirit opposed to this is undoubtedly the spirit of Antichrist, which strives by every means to draw Christians away from the thought of the Second Coming of Christ and the recompense which follows on it. Those who give in to this spirit subject themselves to the danger of not recognizing Antichrist when he comes and of falling into his nets. Precisely this is the most frightful thing in the contemporary world, which is filled with every possible deception and temptation. The servants of Antichrist, as the Lord Himself has forewarned us, will try, 'if possible, to deceive the very elect' (Matt 24:24)[4]. The thought of this, however, should not oppress or crush us, but on the contrary, as the Lord Himself says, Then look up, and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh (Luke 21:28)[5]."

It is such a man, a true Holy Father of these latter times, filled with the Christian apocalyptic expectation of Christ's Second Coming and with the sober Orthodox spirit of preparedness for it, who is the author of a patristic commentary on the culminating book of the New Testament Scriptures, the Apocalypse of St. John the Theologian. Although his interpretation of the book is based solidly on the early Fathers of the Church, the very fact that he himself is so much in their spirit, and in the spirit of St. John, is a pledge for us of the accuracy of his commentary, as well as of the fact that it can speak not merely to our curious minds, but also and above all to our believing hearts. Archbishop Averky was an Orthodox scholar in the unbroken tradition of patristic thought which has come down to us from the ancient Fathers to our own days, and which he imbibed most of all in his own teachers, the 19th-century St. Theophan the Recluse (†1894) and the 20th-century Theophan of Poltava (†1940). An unblemished teacher of the Orthodox moral and spiritual life, he is also an unrivalled theological and patristic guide for us.

There are few saints left in our pitiful times. But even if we do not see about us now such upright and righteous ones as he, his teaching remains with us and can be our guiding beacon in the even darker days ahead which he foresaw, when the Church may have to go into the wilderness, like the Woman of the Apocalypse (ch. 12)[6]—the Church of the last times.

troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me. And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith. And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?
Luke 18:1-8

3 And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie. I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star. And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely. For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book. He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.
Apoc. 22:12-21

4 For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the

world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened. Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you before. Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not. For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together.
Matt. 24: 21-28

5 And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.
Luke 21:25-28

6 And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered. And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood

Archbishop Averky
Of Syracuse And Holy Trinity Monastery

What Is Orthodoxy?

Orthodox Life, Vol. 26, No. 3, May-June 1976, pp. 1-5.

On the First Sunday of the Great Fast our Church celebrates the triumph of Orthodoxy, the victory of true Christian teaching over all perversions and distortions thereof—heresies and false teachings. On the second Sunday of the Great Fast it is as though this triumph of Orthodoxy is repeated and deepened in connection with the celebration of the memory of one of the greatest pillars of Orthodoxy, the hierarch Gregory Palamas, Archbishop of Thessalonica, who by his grace-bearing eloquence and the example of his highly ascetic private life put to shame the teachers of falsehood who dared reject the very essence of Orthodoxy, the podvig of prayer and fasting, which enlightens the human mind with the light of grace and makes it a communicant of the divine glory.

Alas! How few people there are in our times, even among the educated, and at times even among contemporary "theologians" and those in the ranks of the clergy, who understand correctly what Orthodoxy is and wherein its essence lies. They approach this question in an utterly external, formal manner and resolve it too primitively, even naively, overlooking its depths completely and not at all seeing the fullness of its spiritual contents.

The superficial opinion of the majority notwithstanding, Orthodoxy is not merely another of the many "Christian confessions" now in existence, or as it is expressed here in America "denominations." Orthodoxy is the true, undistorted, unperverted by any human sophistry or invention, genuine teaching of Christ in all its purity and fullness—the teaching of faith and piety which is life according to the Faith.

Orthodoxy is not only the sum total of dogmas accepted as true in a purely formal manner. It is not only theory, but practice; it is not only right Faith, but a life which agrees in everything with this Faith. The true Orthodox Christian is not only he who thinks in an Orthodox manner, but who feels according to Orthodoxy and lives Orthodoxy, who strives to embody the true Orthodox teaching of Christ in his life.

"The words that I speak unto you are *spirit and life*"—thus the Lord Jesus Christ spoke to His disciples of His divine teaching [John 6:63][7]. Consequently, the teaching of Christ is not only abstract theory merely, cut off from life, but spirit and life. Therefore, only he who thinks Orthodoxy, feels Orthodoxy and lives Orthodoxy can be considered Orthodox in actuality.

At the same time one must realize and remember that Orthodoxy is not only and always that which is officially called "Orthodox," for in our false and evil times the appearance everywhere of pseudo-Orthodoxy which raises its head and is established in the world is an extremely grievous but, regrettably, an already unquestionable fact. This false Orthodoxy strives fiercely to substitute itself for true Orthodoxy, as in his time Antichrist will strive to supplant and. replace Christ with himself.

Orthodoxy is not merely some type of purely earthly organization which is headed by patriarchs, bishops and priests who hold the ministry in the Church which officially is called "Orthodox." Orthodoxy is the mystical "Body of Christ," the Head of which is Christ Himself (see Eph. 1:22–23[8] and Col. 1:18, 24[9] et seq.), and its composition includes not only priests but all who truly believe in Christ, who have entered in a lawful way through Holy Baptism into the Church He founded, those living upon the earth and those who have died in the Faith and in piety.

The Orthodox Church is not any kind of "monopoly" or "business" of the clergy as think the ignorant and those alien to the spirit of the Church. It is not the patrimony of this or that hierarch or priest. It is the close-knit spiritual union of all who truly believe in Christ, who strive in a holy manner to keep the commandments of Christ, with the sole aim of inheriting that eternal blessedness which Christ the Savior has prepared for us, and if they sin out of weakness, they sincerely repent and strive "to bring forth fruits worthy of repentance" [Luke 3 8].

The Church, it is true, may not be removed completely from the world, for people enter her who are still living on the earth, and therefore the "earthly" element in her composition and external organization is unavoidable, yet the less of this "earthly" element there is, the better it will be for her eternal goals. In any case this "earthly" element should not obscure or suppress the purely spiritual element—the matter of salvation of the soul unto eternal life—for the sake of which the Church was both founded and exists.

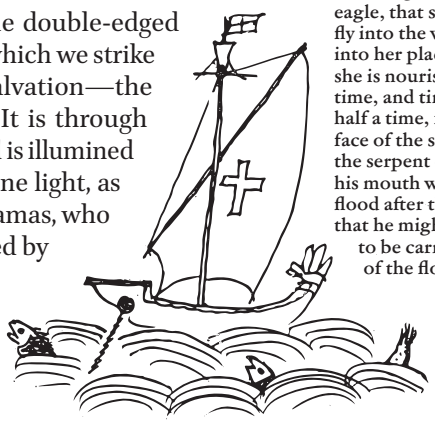
The first and fundamental criterion, which we may use as a guide to distinguish the True Church of Christ from the false Churches (of which there are now so many!), is the fact that it has preserved the Truth intact, undistorted by human sophistries, for according to the Word of God, "the Church is the pillar and ground of truth" [1 Tim. 3:15][11], and therefore in her there can be no falsehood. Any which in its name officially proclaims or confirms any falsehood is already not the Church. Not only the higher servants of the Church, but the ranks of believing laymen must shun every falsehood, remembering the admonition of the Apostle: "Wherefore, putting away lying,-speak every man truth with his neighbor" [Eph. 4:25][12], or "Lie not to one another" [Col. 3:9][13]. Christians must always remember that according to the words of Christ the Savior, lying is from the devil, who "is a liar, and the father of lies" [John 8:44][14]. And so, where there is falsehood there is not the True Orthodox Church of Christ! There is instead a false church which the holy visionary vividly and clearly depicted in his Apocalypse as "a great whore that sitteth upon many waters, with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication" [Rev. 17:1–2][15].

Even in the Old Testament from the prophets of God we see that unfaithfulness to the True God frequently was represented by the image of adultery (see, for example, Ezek. 16:8–58, or 23:2–49). And it is terrifying for us not only to speak, but even to think that in our insane days we would have to observe not a few attempts to turn the very Church of Christ into a "brothel,"—and this not only in the above figurative sense, but also in the literal sense of this word, when it is so easy to justify oneself, fornication and every impurity are not even considered sins! We saw an example of this in the so-called "Living Churchmen" and "renovationists" in our unfortunate homeland after the Revolution, and now in the person of all the contemporary "modernists" who strive to lighten the easy yoke of Christ [Matt. 11:30][16] for themselves and betray the entire ascetic structure of our Holy—Church, legalizing every transgression and moral impurity. To speak here about Orthodoxy, of course, is in no way proper despite the fact that the dogmas of the Faith remain untouched and unharmed!

True Orthodoxy, on the other hand, is alien to every dead formalism. In it there is no blind adherence to the "letter of the law," for it is "spirit and life." Where, from an external and purely formal point of view, everything seems quite correct and strictly legal, this does not mean that it is so in reality. In Orthodoxy there can be no place for Jesuitical casuistry; the favorite dictum of worldly jurists cannot be applied: "One may not trample upon the law—one must go around it."

Orthodoxy is the one and only Truth, the pure Truth, without any admixture or the least shadow of falsehood, lie, evil or fraud.

The most essential thing in Orthodoxy is the podvig of prayer and fasting which the Church particularly extols during the second week of the Great Fast as the double-edged "wondrous sword" by which we strike the enemies of our salvation—the dark demonic power. It is through this podvig that our soul is illumined with grace bearing divine light, as teaches St. Gregory Palamas, who is triumphantly honored by the Holy Church on the second Sunday of the Great Fast.



before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born. And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne. And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days. And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death. Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabiters of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time. And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child. And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent. And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood. And the earth helped the

woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth. And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.
Revelation 12

7 When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you? What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before? It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life. But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him. And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father. From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.
John 6:61–66

8 Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right

Glorifying his sacred memory, the Church calls this wondrous hierarch "the preacher of grace," "the beacon of the Light," "the preacher of the divine light," "an immovable pillar for the Church."

Christ the Savior Himself stressed the great significance of the podvig of prayer and fasting when His disciples found themselves unable to cast out demons from an unfortunate boy who was possessed. He told them clearly, "This kind (of demon) goeth not out save by prayer and fasting" [Matt. 17:21][17]. Interpreting this passage in the gospel narrative, our great patristic theologian-ascetic, the hierarch Theophan the Recluse asks, "May we think that where there is no prayer and fasting, there is a demon already?" And he replies, "We may. Demons, when entering into a person do not always betray their entry, but hide themselves, secretly teaching their hosts every evil and to turn aside every good. That person may be convinced that he is doing everything himself, while he is only carrying out the will of his enemy. Only take up prayer and fasting and the enemy will immediately leave and will wait elsewhere for an opportunity to return; and he really will return if prayer and fasting are soon abandoned" (*Thoughts for Each Day of the Year,* pp. 245–246).

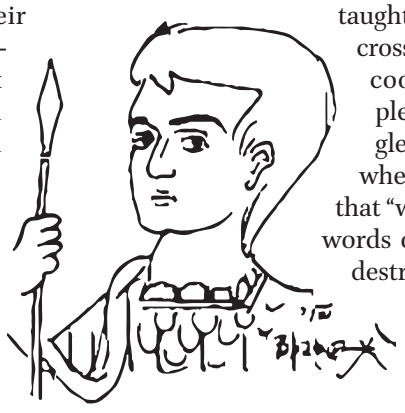
From this a direct conclusion may be reached: where fasting and prayer are disregarded, neglected or completely set aside, there is no trace of Orthodoxy—there is the domain of demons who treat man as their own pathetic toy.

Behold, therefore, where all contemporary "modernism "leads, which demands "reform" in our Orthodox Church! All these liberal free thinkers and their lackies, who strive to belittle the significance of prayer and fasting, however much they shout and proclaim their alleged faithfulness to the dogmatic teaching of our Orthodox Church, cannot be considered really Orthodox, and have shown themselves to be apostates from Orthodoxy.

We will always remember that by itself totally formal Orthodoxy has no goal if it does not have "spirit and life"—and the "spirit and life" of Orthodoxy are first and foremost in the podvig of prayer and fasting; moreover, the *genuine* fasting of which the Church teaches is understood in this instance to be abstinance in every aspect, and not merely declining to taste non-lenten foods.

Without podvig there is altogether no true Christianity, that is to say, Orthodoxy. See what Christ, the First Ascetic, Himself clearly says; "Whosoever will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me" [Mark 8:34][18]. The true Christian, the Orthodox Christian, is only he who strives to emulate Christ in the bearing of the cross and is prepared to crucify himself in the Name of Christ. The holy Apostles clearly taught this. Thus the Apostle Peter writes: "If when you do well and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is accepted with God. For even here unto were ye called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow his steps" [1 Pet. 2:20–21][19]. In precisely the same way the holy Apostle Paul says repeatedly in his epistles that all true Christians must be ascetics, and the ascetic labor of the Christian consists of crucifying himself for the sake of Christ: "They that are Christians have crucified the flesh together with the passions and lusts" [Gal. 5:24][20]. A favorite expression of St. Paul is that we must be crucified with Christ that we might rise with Him. He puts forth this thought in a variety of his sayings in many of his epistles.

You see, therefore, that one who loves only to spend time enjoying himself and does not think of self-denial and self-sacrifce, but continually wallows in every possible fleshly pleasure and delight is completely un-Orthodox, un-Christian. Concerning this the great ascetic of Christian antiquity, the Venerable Isaac the Syrian, taught well: "The way of God is a daily cross. No one ascends to heaven living cooly (i.e. comfortably, carefree, pleased with himself, without struggle). And of the cool path, we know where it ends" (Works, p. 158). This is that "wide and broad way" which, in the words of the Lord Himself, "leadeth to destruction" [Matt. 7:13][21].



This then is what is Orthodoxy, or True Christanity!

E. Sumarokov[22]

Bishop Theophan The Recluse Of Vysha

Great Orthodox Hierarchs Of The 19th & 20th Centuries

The Orthodox Word, 1966, Vol. 2, No. 3 (9), July-August, pp. 90-96

An introduction to one of the most important Orthodox literary figures of the 19th century: translator of the Philokalia, and author of valuable works of spiritual guidance based on the Holy Fathers and his own profound spiritual experience.

I

To bishop Theophan belongs an immense significance in the history of the moral development of Russian society. That thirst for complete union with God which led him into reclusion did not deprive the world and his own people of his help. Even from his remote reclusion he was a great public figure, supporting and directing thousands of people and their spiritual life.

Acquiring great spiritual experience by means of complete self-renunciation and strict daily asceticism, Bp. Theophan generously shared with all who had need of it the treasures of his spiritual experience. No one who appealed to him in writing was denied advice. But he exerted a much wider influence by means of his books. How to live a Christian life; how, amidst the slough of temptations, misfortunes, weaknesses, the weight of our sinful habits, not to fall into despair; how to desire salvation for oneself and begin the work of moral perfection; how to do battle on this path step by step, and to enter ever more deeply into the saving enclosure of the Church: it is of this that the books of Bp. Theophan speak.

In this connection he resembles the great laborer on the field of the spiritual rebirth of the Russian people, *St. Tikhon of Zadonsk*, who wrote so much, so well, and so penetratingly on the salvation of the human soul amid the dangers of this sinful world.

Behind all the spiritual wisdom that is expressed in his books stands the pure image of a great ascetic. Every word of Bp. Theophan produces all the stronger an impression for having been imprinted by his life. When he repeats: "Do not gravitate to the earth. All is corruptible; only the happiness beyond the grave is eternal, unchanging, true, and this happiness depends upon how we spend this life of ours!"—then as a living example of this correct view of the world and the destiny of the soul stand his own self- denial, his reclusion, his desire to take nothing from life but a striving toward God.

hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.
Ephesians 1:15–23

9 And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.
Colossians 1:18–20

10 Then said he to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: every tree therefore which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. And the people asked him, saying, What shall we do then? He answereth and saith unto them, He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise.
Luke 3:7–11

11 These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly: But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the

II

truth. And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory. 1 Timothy 3 14–16

12 But ye have not so learned Christ; If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus: That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another. Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: Neither give place to the devil. Ephesians 4:20–27

13 But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all. Colossians 3:8–11

14 Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me. Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word. Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When

Bp. Theophan was called in the world George Vasilyevich Govorov and he was born on Jan. 10, 1815, in a village near Orel, where his father was a priest. Thus from the first impressions of his youth he lived with the Church. He studied first in the theological preparatory school in the city of Liven, then in the Orel Seminary. However difficult the severe, sometimes cruel conditions of the theological school were at that time, it gave its sons a strong mental temper.

From 1837 to 1841 he continued his education in the Kiev Theological Academy. One may confidently say that the young student often went to the caves of the Kievo-Pechersk Lavra, and amid these recollections there could have been formed in him the resolution to leave the world. Even before finishing the course he was tonsured a monk.

After his tonsure Theophan, together with other newly-tonsured monks, went off to the Lavra, to the well-known Father Partheny. The Starets told them: "You, learned monks who have taken various rules upon yourselves, remember that one thing is most necessary of all: to pray and to pray unceasingly in your mind and heart to God."

Having finished the course with a master's degree, Hieromonk Theophan was assigned as temporary rector of the Kiev-Sofia Theological School; later he was rector of the Novgorod Seminary and a professor and aid to the supervisor in the Petersburg Theological Academy.

This purely scholarly work did not satisfy him, and he petitioned to be discharged from academic service. He was assigned as a member of the Russian Mission in Jerusalem; then, raised to the rank of archimandrite, he was assigned as rector of the Olonetsky Seminary. He was soon transferred to Constantinople as chief priest of the embassy church, then called to Petersburg to be rector of the Theological Academy and supervisor of religious instruction in the secular schools of the capital.

On May 9, 1859, he was consecrated bishop for Tambov. Here he established a diocesan school for girls. During his stay in the Tambov See, Bp. Theophan came to love the isolated Vysha Hermitage. In the summer of 1863 he was transferred to Vladimir, where he served for three years. Here too he opened a diocesan school for girls He served in church often, travelled much throughout the diocese, preached constantly, restored churches, and wholeheartedly lived with his flock, sharing with them both joy and sorrow.

III

In 1861 Bp. Theophan was present at the opening of the relics of St. Tikhon Zadonsky. This event must have produced a very strong impression on him, since he had so much in common with St. Tikhon. He had so loved St. Tikhon from his very childhood, had always thought of him with such enthusiasm, that when the time came for the canonization of this great teacher and protector of the people, Bp. Theophan's joy was inexpressible.

In 1866 Bp. Theophan petitioned to be relieved as Bishop of Vladimir and was appointed head of the Vysha Hermitage, and soon, at a new petition of his, he was freed even of this duty.

What reasons induced Bp. Theophan, full of strength, to leave his diocese and retire into solitude? Various are the characters and gifts of men. It was difficult for him in the midst of the world and those demands to which one must yield as a consequence of human corruption. His unlimited goodness of heart, a meekness like that of a dove, his trust of people and indulgence of them—all this indicated that it was not for him to live amidst the irreconcilable quarrels of vain worldly life. It was very difficult for him to be a leader, especially in such an important position as that of bishop. His trust could be abused; he could never give necessary reprimands. Besides this, he felt the call to devote all his energies to spiritual writing. As for himself personally, he wished to give up all his thoughts to God alone, Whom he loved so absolutely. He desired that nothing might disturb the complete communion with God that was so dear to him. And he left the world to be alone with God.

There was an example that Bp. Theophan kept constantly before his eyes: St. Tikhon, to whom he had been so drawn from his youth, and who also, leaving one diocese, became a spiritual benefactor of the whole Russian people.

To be sure, in retiring from his diocese Bp. Theophan more than anything else thought about the salvation of his own soul by means of complete dedication of every thought and breath to God. But the word of Christ was realized in him. In reclusion, invisible to people, he became a public figure of enormous magnitude. He sought only the Kingdom of God, and his great significance for the world was added to him.

On Sunday, July 2, 1866, the Bishop bade farewell to his flock. After serving the Liturgy, the Bishop gave his last sermon amidst a death-like silence, in which could be heard only an occasional quiet weeping. And there began 28 years of a solitary, full life of uninterrupted labors.

he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not. Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me? He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God.
John 8:42–47

15 And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication. So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration.
Revelation 17:1–6

16 Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.
Matthew 11 28–30

17 And Jesus rebuked the devil; and he departed out of him: and the child was cured

IV

The first six years the Bishop went to all services and to the early Liturgy. In church he stood without moving, without leaning, with eyes closed so as not to be distracted. On feast days he usually officiated.

Beginning in 1872, however, he discontinued all intercourse with people except for the chief priest and his confessor. He went no longer to the monastery church, but built with his own hands in his chambers a small church dedicated to the Baptism of the Lord. For the first ten years he served the Liturgy in this church every Sunday and feast day, and for the next eleven years every day. He served completely alone, sometimes in silence, but sometimes singing.

He seemed to be no longer a man, but an angel with a childlike meekness and gentleness. When people came to him on business, he said what was necessary and plunged back into prayer. He ate only enough so as not to ruin his health. Everything that he received he sent by mail to the poor, leaving himself only enough to buy necessary books. From his publications, which were quickly distributed, he received nothing, hoping only that they might be sold as cheaply as possible. In the rare moments when he was free from prayer, reading, or writing, he occupied himself with manual labor. He painted excellent icons and was skilled in woodcarving and the locksmith's trade.

Every day Bp. Theophan received from twenty to forty letters, and he answered them all. With extraordinary sensitivity he penetrated to the spiritual situation of the writer and warmly, clearly, and in detail replied to this confession of a distressed soul.

His letters, which appeared in print after his death, strike one by their freshness, sensitivity, depth and boldness of feeling, simplicity, warm concern, cordiality.

And thus he lived, directing from his reclusion believers who came to him from afar thirsting for salvation.

A few words should be said on the books of Bp. Theophan. On everything he spoke from experience and systematically, as a man who had himself passed through the stages of spiritual development on which he wanted to lead others. His works include:

On moral theology: *Letters on the Spiritual Life; Letters on the Christian Life; Miscellaneous Letters on Faith and Life; What the Spiritual Life Is and How to Dispose Oneself for it; The Path to Salvation; On Repentance, Communion, and Amendment of Life; On Prayer and Sobriety.*

Commentaries on Holy Scripture: *Commentaries on the Epistles of St. Paul* (all, with the exception of Hebrews); *Commentaries on Psalms 33, 118.*

Translations: *The Philokalia*, in five volumes; *The Ancient Monastic Statutes; Unseen Warfare; The Sermons of St. Simeon the New Theologian*.

V

The life of Bp. Theophan passed unseen by the world, and death too came to him in solitude. In his last years his vision began to fail, but he did not abandon his constant work, continuing to portion his time in the same strict fashion as always. Evenings his cell attendant prepared everything for the celebration of the Liturgy. After the Liturgy the Bishop asked for tea by a knock on the

from that very hour. Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out? And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you. Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.
Matthew 17:18–21

18 But when he had turned about and looked on his disciples, he rebuked Peter, saying, Get thee behind me, Satan: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men. And when he had called the people unto him with his disciples also, he said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it. For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.
Mark 8:33–38

19 For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: As free, and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God. Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king. Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well,

wall. At one o'clock he ate—on non-fast days an egg and a glass of milk. At four o'clock he had tea, and after that no more food for the day.

Beginning January 1, 1891, there were several irregularities in his schedule. On January 6, at 4:30 in the afternoon, his cell-attendant, noting the Bishop's weakness during these days (although he nonetheless continued to write after noon), looked into his room. The Bishop lay on the bed lifeless. His left arm rested on his breast and his right arm was folded as if for a bishop's blessing.

For three days the body remained in the small church in his cell and for three days it was in the cathedral—and there was no corruption. When he was vested in his bishop's vestments, the face of the dead man was brightened by a joyful smile. Bp. Theophan died at the age of 79. He was buried in the unheated Kazan Cathedral.

In Bp. Theophan's cell everything was extremely simple, even meager. The walls were bare, the furniture old: a cupboard worth a ruble, a two-ruble chest, an old table, an old reading stand, an iron folding bed, sofas of birch wood with hard seats. There was a trunk with instruments for lathe-work, carpentry, book-binding; photographic equipment, a bench for sawing, a joiner's bench. There was a gray cotton undercassock, a wooden panagia, a wooden pectoral cross, a telescope, a microscope, an anatomical and a geographical atlas.

And then the books—books without number, without end, in Russian, Slavonic, Greek, French, German, and English. Among them were: a complete collection of the Holy Fathers; a theological encyclopedia in French in 150 volumes; Soloviev's History of Russia; Schlosser's Universal History; the works of the philosophers Hegel, Fichte, Jacobi, and others; works on natural history by Humboldt, Darwin, Fichte, and others. One calls to mind his words: "It is good to understand the structure of plants, of animals, especially of man, and the laws of life; in them is revealed the wisdom of God, which is great in everything."

In addition there were an immense number of icons, a picture of St. Seraphim of Sarov[23], and many icons painted by the Bishop himself.

The great hierarch is hidden from us in body, but his spirit lives in the divinely wise printed works which he left. In the person of Bp. Theophan, as Archbp. Nikander of Vilna has said, we have a universal Christian teacher, even though he did not speak; a public figure, though in reclusion; a preacher of the Church who was heard everywhere, even though in his last years he appeared in no Church see; a missionary-convictor of sectarian errors, even though he did not step out onto the field that was open to missionary activity; a bright lamp of Christ's teaching for Orthodox people, even though he concealed himself from the people's gaze; possessing scarcely a sufficiency of earthly goods, yet enriching all with the spiritual wealth of his teaching; seeking no temporal, earthly glory, yet glorified now both by people and by theological science, as well as by various institutions.

February 5

The monks asked the great **Abba Ischyrion**: *"What have we done?" "We have fulfilled the commandments of God*," Ischyrion replied. *"And what will those do who come after us?" "They will do what we do, but only half as much." "And those after them?" "Before the end of time, they will not keep the monastic rule, but such misfortunes and temptations will befall them that, through their patience during those assaults and temptations, they will prove themselves greater than us and our fathers in the Kingdom of God."*

Bishop Theophan The Recluse

The Path To Salvation

The Orthodox Word, 1966, Vol. 2, No. 3 (9), July-August, pp. 97-99

The following essay, a short but typical example of Bishop Theophan's writing, is the Foreword to his major work, The Path to Salvation, and constitutes an outline, by a highly qualified and experienced authority, of the very phenomenon of the spiritual life: its nature, its dangers, its goal.

It is possible to describe the feelings and inclinations which a Christian must have, but this is very far from being all that is demanded for the ordering of one's salvation. The important thing for us is a real life in the spirit of Christ. But just touch on this, and how many perplexities are uncovered, how many guideposts arc necessary, as a result, almost at every step!

True, one may know man's final goal: communion with God; and one may describe the path to it: faith, and walking in the commandments, with the aid of Divine grace. One need only say in addition: Here is the path—start walking!

This is easily said; but how to do it? For the most part the very desire to walk is lacking. The soul, attracted by some passion or other, stubbornly repulses every compelling force and every call; the eyes turn away from God and do not want to look at Him. The law of Christ is not to one's liking; there is no disposition even to listen to it. One may ask, how does one reach the point when the desire is born to walk toward God on the path of Christ? What does one do so that the law will imprint itself on the heart, and man, acting according to this law, will act as if from himself, unconstrained; so that this law will not lie on him, but will as it were proceed from him?

But suppose someone has turned toward God, suppose he has come to love His law; is the very going toward God, the very walking on the path of Christ's law, already necessary and will it be successful merely because we desire it to be? No. Besides the desire one must also have the strength and knowledge to act; one must have active wisdom. Whoever enters on the true path of pleasing God, or who begins with the aid of grace to strive toward God on the path of Christ's law, will inevitably be threatened by the danger of losing his way at the crossroads, of going astray and perishing, imagining himself saved. These crossroads are unavoidable because of the sinful inclination and disorder of one's faculties, which are capable of presenting things in a false light—to deceive and destroy a man. To this is joined the flattery of Satan, who is reluctant to be separated from his victims and, when someone from his domain goes to the light of Christ, pursues him and sets every manner of net in order to catch him again; and quite often he indeed catches him. Consequently it is necessary for someone who already has the desire to walk on the indicated path to the Lord to be shown in addition all the deviations that are possible on this path, so that the traveller may be warned in advance about this, may see the dangers that are to be encountered, and may know how to avoid them.

These general considerations which are unavoidable to all on the path of salvation render indispensable certain guiding rules of the Christian life by which it should be determined: how to attain to the saving desire for communion with God and the zeal to remain in it, and how to reach

and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.
1 Peter 2:15–25

20 This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness,

lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.
Galatians 5:16–26

21 Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets. Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.
Matthew 7:12–14

22 Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets. Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.
Matthew 7:12–14

23 Before his canonization, which occurred in 1903 (*trans. note*).

God without misfortune amidst all the crossroads that may be met on this path at every step—in other words, how to begin to live the Christian life and how, having begun, to perfect oneself in it.

The sowing and development of the Christian life are different in essence from the sowing and development of natural life, owing to the special character of the Christian life and its relation to our nature. A man is not born a Christian, but becomes such after birth. The seed of Christ falls on the soil of a heart that is already beating. But since the naturally-born man is injured and opposed by the demand of Christianity,—while in a plant, for example, the beginning of life is the stirring of a sprout in the seed, an awakening of as it were dormant powers—the beginning of a true Christian life in a man is a kind of re-creation, an endowing new powers, of new life. Further, suppose that Christianity is received as a law, i.e., the resolution is made to live a Christian life: this seed of life (this resolution) is not surrounded in a man by elements favorable to him, and besides this the whole man, his body and soul, remain unadapted to the new life, unsubmissive to the yoke of Christ. Therefore from this moment begins in a man a labor of sweat—to educate his whole self, all his faculties, according to the Christian standard. This is why, while growth in plants, for example, is a gradual development of faculties, easy, unconstrained—in a Christian it is a battle with oneself involving much labor, intense and sorrowful, and he must dispose his faculties for something for which they have no inclination: like a soldier, he must take every step of land, even his own, from his enemies by means of warfare, with the double-edged sword of forcing himself and opposing himself. Finally, after long labors and exertions, the Christian principles appear victorious, reigning without opposition; they penetrate the whole composition of human nature, dislodging from it demands and inclinations hostile to themselves, and place it in a state of passionlessness and purity, making it worthy of the blessedness of the pure in heart—to see God in themselves in sincerest communion with Him.

Such is the place in us of the Christian life. This life has three stages which may be called: 1. turning to God; 2. purification or self-amendment; 3. sanctification. In the first stage a man turns from darkness to light, from the domain of Satan to God; in the second, he cleanses the chamber of his heart from every impurity, in order to receive Christ the Lord Who is coming to him; in the third, the Lord comes, takes up His abode in his heart, and communes with him. This is the state of blessed communion with God—the goal of all labors and ascetic endeavors.

To describe all this and determine its laws will mean—*to indicate the path to salvation*...

March 8

Be more confiding in the Lord than in your own mother. Confess all to Him. He will not betray you. Embrace all of His commandments as beneficial. They will not deceive you. Inasmuch as you trust in God, so also be vigilant toward your enemies—the flesh, the world and the demons. All of this was expressed much better by the glorious saint of God, **Ephraim the Syrian**: *"In embracing the commandments of God, have simplicity; and, in warding off hostile intrigues, have cunning (as with the dove and the serpent)."*

I. M. Kontzevitch

Saint John Of Kronstadt And The Spiritual Crisis Of Russia

II / II

Great Orthodox Hierarchs Of The 19th & 20th Centuries

The Orthodox Word, Vol. 1, No. 5, September-October 1965, pp. 171-178

John was sent by God like the great prophets of the Old Testament, a righteous accuser, warning of the approaching fall of the Orthodox Empire and the end of the world, calling to repentance. This is the second and final part of an article[24] examining Saint John and the epoch in which he lived.

II - The Prophetic Office Of Saint John

How often would I have gathered thy children together, even is a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!

Matthew 23:37[25]

The 19th century and the beginning of the 20th saw more than the flowering of monastic asceticism; it was an epoch of rebirth in every area of Russian life. In Church art, after a period of decadence, could be observed a turn to fine ancient examples. I he higher ecclesiastical schools freed themselves from foreign, non-Orthodox influences and entered upon an independent path. An independent theological science was established. Thanks to a series of Orthodox emperors, there was restored the canonical function of the monarch as the true son of the Church and the guardian of Orthodoxy. The Synodal organization of the Church introduced by Peter the Great was destined to end, and the course was sec toward restoration of the Patriarchate. In everything an upward movement could be felt. Russia was heading with rapid steps toward a blossoming of culture, toward the peak of her fortune, power, and glory.

But simultaneously with the creative, constructive forces there was a development of centrifugal, destructive forces. The overwhelming majority of Russian society was infected by that pernicious atheistic, revolutionary spirit, coming to us from the West, which was so brilliantly depicted in Dostoyevsky's *Possessed* (*The Demons*). Together

24 From the *Jubilee Anthology* (1908–1958) published by The Memorial Fund of Sr. John of Kronstadt, Utica, New York. Copyright 1958; translated with permission (somewhat abridged). The first part appeared in vol. 1, no. 2, of *The Orthodox Word*.

25 Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell? Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city: That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.
Matthew 23:33–39

26 I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth. Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: (but) he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also. Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father. And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life.
1 John 2:21–25

with atheism, moral decay was rapidly spreading Even some of those who were on the side of the destructive forces sensed at times the dead-end to which the leftist intelligentsia had come, taking the whole of Russia with them.

A vivid description of what was happening in Russia at the end of the last century was made in 1901 in the magazine *The Pilot* by the remarkable contemporary of Fr. John, Archbishop Amvrossy of Kharkov (1820–1901), in a whole series of essays written with presentiment of his imminent death, which indeed soon followed.

> "What can one say of our so-called light literature," said this starets and archpastor, "which is so eagerly spread among the people? It is the vehicle of light-minded and talentless works which pervert the people's taste and disaccustom them from serious spiritual reading.
> "And what does our educated society have to offer, they who so love to make free and self-confident judgements concerning every question and contemporary event? —Nothing but a market-place, where every kind of cheap liberal idea and opinion is offered and exchanged... Someone must open the eyes of these careless and blinded people, *who are going to their destruction and drawing after them a great people!*
> "I am an old man, over eighty... I have seen with my own eyes all the reforms of the past century, both the fortunate and the unsuccessful... I have seen the rapid change in popular morals and am amazed how these thinking people of ours do not notice the decline of our people from that firm intellectual and moral peak on which our ancestors stood, do not see how we are being robbed of our spiritual powers, bow the purity and order of our family life and our simplicity and modesty of manners are being lost... Our higher and leading classes are nourished by a spirit of unbelief and renunciation of the teaching of Christ. They are being lost for the Church and are breaking away from the millions of Orthodox people, for whom we should be leaders. By their unbelief and liberalism they infect the half-educated clerks, merchants, shopmen, all the way down to the district scribes."

Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow (1783–1867) likewise foresaw, long in advance, the terrible future of Russia. Bishop Leonid Krasnopevtsev relates this in his memoirs. "Once," he writes, "the Metropolitan said to me that he felt that the future was covered with dark clouds, and that when the storm broke the people would be so deeply shaken by its blows that they would forget all that had preceded the storm." Two months before his death he told the Rector of the Sergieva Lavra that he saw in the future "a terrible storm that will come to us from the West."

The approaching downfall and its causes were seen also by an elder contemporary of Fr. John—Bp. Theophan the Recluse (1815–1894); still in the sixties and seventies of the last century he said: "They have sunk in the Western mire up to the cars, and they think: all is well! ... In a generation, perhaps in two, our Orthodoxy will evaporate... Why did the French come to us (in 1812)? God sent them to uproot the evil which we had also learned from them... Such is the law of God's justice: one is healed of sin by that which attracted one to it."

Even earlier warnings about the Divine chastisement that was moving upon Russia were given by our great ascetics and saints, such as St. Seraphim of Sarov, Fr. Illiodor of the Glinskaya hermitage, who had a well-known vision of the approaching fate of Russia, and also the Startsi of Optina, among others. Our great writers and thinkers, such as Dostoyevsky, also foresaw and spoke of this; as did K. N. Leontiev, who clearly pointed out the causes of the fall; and even before any of these there were the forebodings of I. Kireyevsky.

Among the contemporaries of Fr. John many saw and spoke about the downfall and fought against it, but louder than any other resounded the accusing and prophetic voice of Fr. John. He bore on himself the whole weight of the prophetic office.

An attack of malice and hatred was launched against Fr. John with exceptional force in the days of the first revolution (1905), when he openly and sharply stood up against it and broke off with the leading society. Insults and physical threats against him went so far that Fr. John was in constant danger. A society was formed for his defense, under the presidency of Metrop. Makary of Moscow. At that time a whole constellation of "leading" writers mocked the Church and the government, striving to outdo each other in their blasphemies and mockery. But Lev Tolstoy surpassed them all. Here is what Fr. John had to say of him: "Look at these insolent revilers today: Tolstoy and all his adherents and followers, real antichrists, liars, according to the Apostle John: *Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist that denieth the Father and the Son* [1 John 2:22][26]."

Turning to the learned, Fr. John threatened them prophetically: "From the elevation of your platforms you are disdainful of the Lord God, His

Word, not noticing that your perdition does not sleep. The Lord will scatter you. He will scatter you in such a way that no one will even know where your bones lie."

In entreaty Fr. John turned to the Russian people:

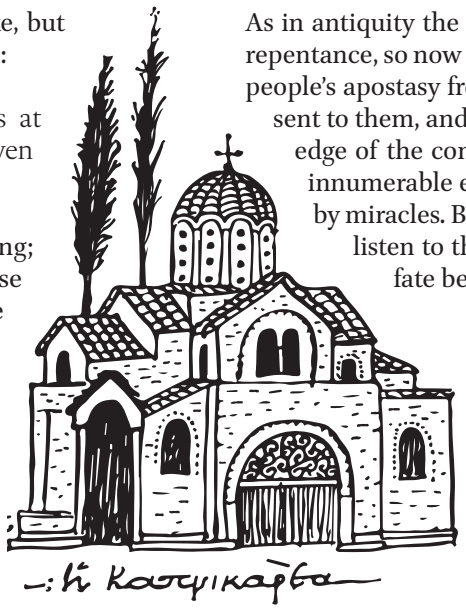
> "Learn. O Russia, to believe in the God Almighty Who rules the world by His decrees, and learn from your holy forefathers faith, wisdom, and courage." "The Lord has entrusted us, Russians, with the great, saving gift of Orthodox-faith... Arise, O Russian man! ... Who has taught you disobedience and insane rebellion, such as never were in Russia?"
> "...What will finally come of the disorder that exists in our lives? Lawlessness spreads over the earth; the kingdom of the enemy extends itself, while Thy Kingdom diminishes; few are Thy chosen ones, in whose hearts Thou dwellest, while many are the slaves of the devil, in whose hearts, like a thief, the immemorial killer of men takes his seat. What art Thou doing with us, O Lord? The blood of Thy Testament cries out from the earth, but Thy evangelical voice does not penetrate to the hearts of Christians. Thy Commandments are neglected, the Church statutes are trampled underfoot—what hast Thou done with us, O Lord?"

In 1907, when everything was completely calm in Russia, Fr. John, seeing the general unfeelingness and lack of repentance, penetrated with prophetic vision to the imminent suffering of the Russian people; and the holy Starets, weighed down by severe infirmities, being himself at the edge of the grave, prophesied sternly many times in church, and in a transport of ardent compassion he no longer spoke, but shouted, raising his hands high:

> "Repent: a terrible time is at hand, such as you cannot even imagine!"

"The impression was striking; terror took possession of those who were present, and the church resounded with weeping and wailing. My wife and I"—says Sursky[27]—"were perplexed: what would it be? War? Earthquake? Flood? By the power of the Prophet's words, however, we understood that it would be something much more terrible, and the supposition occurred to me that the earth's axis was about to shift."

> "The people of the world before the Flood"—said Fr. John—"were given 120 years for repentance, and they were warned that for their sins there would be chastisement from God—the Flood. Time passed, and people became depraved; they did not think of repentance and did not believe the preacher of repentance, the righteous Noah—and the word of God was fulfilled exactly. The Hebrews did not believe the Prophets, who said that they would be taken captive by the Babylonian king; and so they continued to worship idols—and went into captivity, and Jerusalem was laid waste, and all its wealth passed over to Babylon. The Jews of the time of Jesus Christ did not believe in Christ as Messiah and put Him to death on the Cross, and the prophecy of Christ about Jerusalem was soon fulfilled, the Romans exterminating the Jews without mercy.
> 'So, today also, the people have lost their senses; they do not listen to the lamentation of the Church, they say—it is all fairy-tales, the priests deceive us for their own profit.
> "O blind men, O stiff necked and uncircumsized of heart, do you not see before your very eyes the events foretold by the Gospel and now being accomplished? Here is internecine war, famine, plagues. Will you not believe in Divine Justice even now? Know, then, that judgement is at the doors and that the Lord is soon coming in glory to judge the living and the dead!" [2 Tim. 4:1][28]



As in antiquity the Lord sent prophets to call to repentance, so now also, in the age of the Russian people's apostasy from God, a great prophet was sent to them, and he confirmed his foreknowledge of the coming Divine chastisement by innumerable examples of clairvoyance and by miracles. But the Russian people did not listen to the Prophet's call, and thus its fate became inevitable.

The path to the rebirth of Russia, as also to the personal salvation of each of us, was pointed out by Fr. John; and this is the only path, there is no other.

27 I. K. Sursky, *Father John of Kronstadt*, Belgrade, 1938, 2 vols.

28 I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. 2 Timothy 4:1–4

Epilogue

And their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.

Matthew 13:15[29]; Isaiah 6:10[30]

As has already been said, Fr John stepped forward openly against the Revolution, in defense of faith and throne As is veil known, he solemnly blessed the banners and standards of the Russian People's Union and became an honorary member of it.

In a book about Fr. John the words of Archpriest Sergv Chetverikov are cited, where, speaking of these "faults" of Fr. John, he continues: "But all these "faults" of Fr. John, if such they be, do not in the least darken his pure and attractive spiritual face" And then Fr. Chetverikov condescendingly forgives these "faults": "In one's appraisal of Fr John one must stand above all these external and accidental sides of his life."

Thus, in the eyes of Fr. Chetverikov, the whole prophetic office of Fr. John is no more than an "external and accidental side of his life." Here Fr. Chetverikov appears as a representative of leftist society and expresses its sympathetic attitude toward the Revolution.

A man of leftist convictions by the very orientation of his soul cannot penetrate to the essence of sanctity. The state of grace of a God-inspired prophet, who sees all in a true light and speaks nothing of his own, but only what God inspires in him—is closed to the understanding of such a man.

The prophecy of Fr. John has been fulfilled exactly, but their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.

The rebirth of Russia is possible only through repentance; stubborn persistence in the sin of revolution will prevent our return to the homeland.

29 He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath. Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear. For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.
Matthew 13 11–17

30 And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed. Then said I, Lord, how long? And he answered, Until

The Prophets Of God Raise The Dead

The preaching of God's great prophets is confirmed by the testimony of their miracles

And Elisha went into the house, and behold, the dead child was laid upon his bed. And Elisha went in, and shut the door upon themselves, the two, and prayed to too Lord. And he went up, and lay upon the child, and put his mouth upon his mouth, and his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his bands, and bowed himself upon him, and the flesh of the child grew warm... And he bowed himself on the child seven times; and the child opened his eyes... And Elisha said, take thy son. And the woman went in, and fell at his feet, and did obeisance bowing to the ground; and she took her son, and went out. [2 Kings 4:32–37]

The wife of O., while preparing to bear her fourth or fifth child, was taken severely ill. Her doctors determined that the foetus had died and that a Caesarean section was required to remove it. But first the family sent a telegram to Fr John of Kronstadt, whom they knew Fr. John replied: "Leaving immediately, praying to God. John Sergiev."

"The next day about noon he entered the O. apartment, where by that time a whole crowd of relatives and friends had gathered. "Where is Liza?" Fr. John asked, entering the drawing-room with his customary rapid gait. "Take me to her, and all of you remain here quietly."

"Fr. John entered the adjoining bedroom and closed the heavy doors after him. Minutes passed, that seemed like half-hours. In the drawing-room it was as quiet as a burial vault. And suddenly the bedroom doors were flung open with a loud noise. In the doorway stood a gray-haired old man in a priest's cassock, over which he had on an old stole, with a thin, dishevelled gray beard, with an extraordinary face that was red from the intense effort he had exerted at prayer and covered with

great drops of sweat. And suddenly there almost thundered from Fr. John fearful, terrible words, words that came from another world. "The Lord God has been pleased to work a miracle! He has been pleased to resurrect a dead child in the womb! Liza will bear a son! ..."

" "It's incomprehensible!" said, excitedly, one of the doctors who had come for the operation, just two hours after Fr. John had left. "The foetus is alive... I don't understand a thing about it, not a thing... I affirmed and affirm now that the foetus was dead and that blood-poisoning began long ago." The other doctors understood no more.

"The same night Mrs. O. was successfully and quickly delivered of a perfectly healthy boy."

Eugene Vadimov (Sursky, *op. cit.*, pp. 244-6).

the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate, And the LORD have removed men far away, and there be a great forsaking in the midst of the land. But yet in it shall be a tenth, and it shall return, and shall be eaten: as a teil tree, and as an oak, whose substance is in them, when they cast their leaves: so the holy seed shall be the substance thereof.
Isaiah 6:9–13

January 14

If, at times, the dogmas of the Faith seem like hard food, you should first endeavor to fulfill the moral dogmas of Christianity: then the understanding of the dogmas of the Faith will be revealed to you. The inquisitive examination of higher things, without effort regarding the improvement of your life, does not bring any benefit. Once, the monks of Egypt were reflecting on **Melchisedek**, and not being able to come to a clear understanding of the mysterious personality of this ancient king and high priest, they invited **Abba Copres** to their assembly and asked him about **Melchisedek**. Upon hearing this, **Copres** struck himself three times on the mouth and said: *"Woe to you Copres! You left that which God commanded you to do, and you inquire into that which God does not require of you."* Hearing him, the monks were ashamed and dispersed. **St. John Chrysostom** writes: *"If we adhere to the true dogmas and are not concerned about our behavior, we will not have any kind of benefit; and in the same way, if we concern ourselves about our behavior and neglect true dogmas, we will receive no benefit for our salvation. If we want to be delivered from Gehenna and to gain the Kingdom, we need to be adorned on both sides—with correctness of dogmas and honorable living."*

Saint Theophan, Archbishop Of Poltava, The New Hermit [1873–1943]

Commemorated **February 19**

Great Orthodox Hierarchs Of The 19th & 20th Centuries

The Orthodox Word, Vol. 5, No. 5 (28), September-October 1969, pp. 191-96

In connection with the forthcoming 50th anniversary of the canonical establishment of the independence of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, free of Communist domination, we wish to present brief biographical sketches of the outstanding pillars of this Church. Some of them have attained unquestionable sanctity and shine today against the background of the present age of apostasy as indeed equal to the great Saint-Hierarchs of the truly Ecumenical Orthodox Church of Christ the Saviour. With some of these archpastors the readers of The Orthodox Word are already acquainted: Archbp. John Maximovitch (1966, no. 5), Metrop. Anastassy (1965, no. 4), Archbps. Ioasaph (1968, no. 2), Vitaly (1965, no.3), and now Theophan.

Born Basil Dimitrievich Bystrov in 1873, he was the son of a priest of the village of Podmosh in the diocese of St. Petersburg and a pupil of the local religious schools. In 1892, after finishing the course of instruction in the seminary, he entered the St. Petersburg Theological Academy first on the list of examinees. He went from year to year in the Academy as first student. In 1896 he completed the Academy and remained there to teach; in two years he became a hieromonk and in 1901 was raised to the rank of archimandrite and promoted to temporary inspector of the Academy. 1905 he was honored with the degree of Master of Theology for his work, "The Tetragrammaton, or the Divine Name of Jehovah in the Old Testament," and three years later named director of the Academy. That same year in the St. Alexander Nevsky Lavra he was consecrated Bishop of Yamburg, the fourth vicar of the St. Petersburg Diocese. On the eve of his consecration as bishop, in his sermon addressed to his consecrator-hierarchs, he testified:

> "...Ever since I came into being, I observe in myself an unceasing battle of life and death in the realm of existence, both natural and spiritual. O, how heavy this battle has been at times in me; but may there be thanks to the Lord for it! It has deeply implanted in my heart the saving truth that I in myself am nothing, and that the Lord for me is everything."

Interiorly he was of a highly spiritual cast of soul and a great man of prayer, for which he became widely known preeminently in the capital society. At one time he became the spiritual advisor to the Imperial Family. Later, he would recall with emotion how he often celebrated the Liturgy at the Court church on weekdays and how the Empress herself and all four Great Princesses sang on the cliros. The Revolution overtook him as Archbishop of Poltava, from whence he emigrated with the White Army through Constantinople to Bulgaria, where he lived many years.

Regarding the height of his spiritual life one may see from the memoirs of H. Y. Kontzevich:

"I was told that in his student years he had labored intensely in asceticism, slept on the floor and the like, and ruined his health; he had tuberculosis and poor digestion. Therefore in his mature years he was an opponent of excessive physical asceticism. His voice always remained very weak. He was of small stature, thin, and there was something special in him that evoked a feeling of reverent awe. Jokes or laughter in his presence were impossible. He was like an unearthly being, a manifestation from the other world. The practical problems of life were foreign to him. He was a very learned man. To govern a diocese and look into worldly affairs were not his calling. It was a great mistake to deprive him of the rectorship of St. Petersburg Academy, where he was in his place. He was a great expert in patrology and patristics. He himself being a practicer of mental prayer and having attained a high stage in this practice, he knew as no one else the teaching of the Holy Fathers concerning this "science of sciences." Archpriest Sergy Chetverikov, who wrote together with Abbot Chariton of Valaam Monastery a book on the Prayer of Jesus[31], asked to be a disciple of Archbishop Theophan. But he was given a condition by the holy man: break off with the YMCA[32]. This Fr. Sergy would not do.

"My husband went to college in Poltava and knew how the people there revered Vladika Theophan. When he came to serve in the cathedral, the steps of the temple and the whole path by the entrance were strewn with flowers. My aunt, E. A. N., went with her husband to Poltava and after returning related to me the following incident: In Poltava there lived an especially devout couple. They were exceptionally devoted to Vladika. When the husband died, the widow, being in great grief, asked Vladika if he could inform her concerning the lot of her husband beyond the grave. Vladika answered that in a short time he might be able to give her an answer to her question. A certain time passed and Vladika, who had prayed, told the widow that her husband had found mercy with God.

'Another incident was related by Vladimir Davidovich, Prince Zhevakhov, who later became Bishop Ioasaph. He asked Vladika Theophan concerning the lot of the bishop of Belgorod, who had been found hanged in the bathroom of the episcopal residence. Had his soul perished? Vladika Theophan said that this bishop had not perished. He had not hanged himself, but this had been done to him by demons. It turned out that this house had been rebuilt, and earlier there had been a house church there. But the builders had blasphemously made a bathroom where previously there had been the sanctuary and had stood the altar. When consecrated places are defiled, or where murder or suicide have been performed, and the grace of God has left the place, there demons settle in. Whether or not this bishop had been to blame in this blasphemous act, he turned out to be a victim of it.

"When Vladika lived in seclusion in Clamart, near Paris, I had the honor of sometimes being present when he served the Divine Liturgy, and afterwards of sharing his trapeza at his table, when he would have talks on spiritual life, illustrating them by living examples of holy ascetics. With difficulty, being already then a little deaf, I devoured with strained attention his priceless narratives, as if coming from the otherworld. Later, when I was informed of his death, an unexplainable torrent of bitterness seized me; I wept, knowing that a real saint had left this earth, leaving spiritual emptiness behind him and making this world gray and dull. At that time I had a terrible and unceasing toothache which gave me no peace. In agony, a flash of hope enlightened me: I turned mentally to Vladika as if he were alive right here and could hear me, and I prayed to him for help. Instantly the pain stopped! Although I never doubted his sanctity, this miraculous intercession was to me a clear sign of his being indeed a saint of God!"

Not without interest are his words concerning the future of much-suffering Russia, written in a letter to the same person in 1925:

> You ask me about the near future and about the last times. I do not speak on my own, but give the revelation of the startsi. And they have handed down to me the following: The coming of Antichrist draws nigh and is very near. The time separating us from him should be counted a matter of years, and at most a matter of some decades. But before the coming of Antichrist Russia must yet be restored, to be sure, for a short time. And in Russia there must be a Tsar, fore-chosen by the Lord Himself. He will be a man of burning faith, great mind and iron will. This much has been revealed about him. We shall await the fulfillment of what has been revealed. Judging by many signs, it is drawing nigh, unless because of our sins the Lord God shall revoke, shall alter what has been promised. According to the witness of the Word of God, this also happens.

31 Translated as *The Art of Prayer*, Faber & Faber, London, 1966. Reviewed in *The Orthodox Word*, 1967, no. 2, p. 66.

32 A pseudo-Christian organization that, especially in Europe, has worked hard to undermine the traditional Orthodox other-worldly spirituality and replace it with a purely humanitarian world-view. See *The Orthodox Word,* 1969, no. 4, pp. 146, 148.

Memorable also was the moment when Archbishop Theophan met with a group of clergy of the "living church" trend and some liberal professors at the Moscow All Russian Council in 1917–1918. Between adherents of the Church order of Holy Russia and modernist clerics the dispute never died out during the whole time of work on the Council as to whether one should conduct church life by the old course or make concessions to the spirit of the times and modernize church life. And here the modernists politely, respectfully came to Archbishop Theophan; apparently even they felt in him a spiritual giant of Orthodoxy... "We respect you, Vladika, we know your church wisdom... But the waves of the times flow swiftly, changing everything, changing us; one must give in to them. You, too, must give in, Vladika, to the raging waves... Otherwise with whom will you be left? You will be left alone."

> "With whom will I be left?" Vladika meekly answered them. "I will be with St. Vladimir the enlightener of Russia. With Sts. Anthony and Theodosius the Wonderworkers of Kiev-Caves Monastery, with the holy Hierarchs and Wonderworkers of Moscow. With Sts. Sergius and Seraphim and with all the holy martyrs, God-pleasing monks and wonderworkers who have gloriously shone forth on Russian soil. But you, dear brothers, with whom will you be left if even with your great numbers you give over to the will of the waves of the times? They have already carried you to the flabbiness of Kerensky, and soon they will carry you under the yoke of the brutal Lenin, into the claws of the red beast."

The church modernists left Vladika in silence after his reply. (Maharoblidze.)

The last years of his secluded life be spent in France; he went into retirement and lived as a hermit in the country in certain caves. Concerning the conditions of the last years of the life of Archbishop Theophan, the "Hierarch-Cavedweller," Fr. Theodore I. relates:

> "Vladika died in the years of the German occupation, in the village of Amboise in France. Here we visited his modest grave in the small Catholic village cemetery, on a hill. The nearest settlement to the cemetery, with an old Catholic church, is half a mile. How quiet it was at the cemetery! There was an Orthodox cross, name, dates. We served a panikhida with two old women, his servants-novices, perhaps nuns in secret tonsure. We went home quietly. The road was about two or three miles to the place where, in chalk caves in the hills, the hierarch lived.
>
> "There were three rather long, high, well-carved-out caves. Perhaps this reminded him of the life of St. Paul of Thebes and St. Anthony the Great. In one was the former cell of Vladika, which was also his house church. In another lived twelve fierce dogs—doberman-pincers, capable of tearing a man apart in a minute. During the day they were chained. In the third cave lived goats, geese, and ducks, which comprised the whole of Vladika's farm. In a fourth cave was the storehouse, where on the floor we saw a sack of walnuts, furniture piled high, beds, tables, etc.; there we lodged for the night. In the garden there was a well and some fruit trees, and on the hill a vineyard. There was home-made strong and aromatic wine, and well-churned butter, milk, cheese, etc., which were for sale.
>
> "In Vladika's cell we saw two of his photographic portraits; a Bible with dry flowers inserted, gathered at St. Seraphim's canal at Diveyevo, and other sacred things put in; a case with relics, perhaps as many as 24, in little gold vessels; and much else of sacred relics..." Such was the atmosphere of his last earthly dwelling place.

After his holy repose, exactly on the 40th day, the righteous Vladika appeared to his grieving spiritual son, Ioasaph, later Archbishop of Canada, concerning which this marvellous ascetic-enlightener of Canada[33] related the following, which is a testimony of Vladika Theophan's sanctity:

> "After the death of my marvellous preceptor, I grieved terribly... It was very difficult for me, and I prayed much for him... And then, on the night of the 40th day after his repose, I dreamed I was standing before a magnificent church, from which after the service a multitude of hierarchs came out. I recognized the great hierarchs—Sts. Basil the Great, John Chrysostom, Gregory the Theologian and many others; suddenly in their midst I saw—Vladika Theophan! I ran up to him: "Vladika, where do you come from?" "Well, as you see, we have just served Liturgy together. Come with us." I went. All took places in a spacious automobile, or perhaps boat, which began as it were to sail in the air. Past us went hills, forests, valleys of indescribable beauty, wondrous churches and monasteries. My Abba began to point out these abodes to me and revealed their fates: "This one here will be saved, but that one, there below in the valley, will perish."—It was terrible to behold! And all around us were beautiful

33 See *The Orthodox Word*, 1968, no. 2, pp. 88ff.

gardens, and a wondrous fragrance. I looked with delight, without seeing enough... For a long time we were carried thus in the air, in the midst of this magnificence. Finally I could not contain myself and asked: "But where are we?" Vladika Theophan answered me: "And why is it you don't understand—in paradise!" From that moment I was reassured, having understood that my dear preceptor had been found worthy of eternal blessedness."

May the Lord grant to us also, by the prayers of the righteous Vladika Theophan, to be worthy of mercy with God. Amen.

January 18

To the question, *"Why did the Son of God appear on earth in a human body and not in another form of creation?"* the brilliant **St. Athanasius** replied in this manner: *"If they ask why did He not appear in some other, better form of creation—for example, as the sun or the moon, or the stars or fire, or the wind—but just as a man, let them know that the Lord did not come to show Himself, but to heal and teach sufferers. For to reveal Himself only to amaze the viewers would mean to come for a show. It was necessary for the Healer and the Teacher, not only to come, but to serve for the benefit of the suffering ones, and to reveal Himself in such a way that this revelation would be bearable for the sufferers. Not one single creature was in error in the eyes of God, except man alone: neither the sun, nor the moon, nor the sky, nor the stars, nor the water, nor the wind betrayed their ranks. On the contrary, knowing their Creator and their King—the Word—they all remained as they were created. Only human beings separated themselves from good and replaced truth with deceit; and the honor belonging to God (as well as the knowledge about Him) they transferred to devils and to men carved out of stone [idols]. What, therefore, is so unbelievable in this, that the Logos appeared as a man to save mankind?"* Indeed, we also ask the unbelievers of our day: *"In what form would you wish God to appear, if not as a man?"*

Hieromonk Seraphim Of Platina

The Lenten Sermons Of Father George Calciu

The Orthodox Word, 1982, Vol. 18, No. 1 (102), Jan-Feb, pp. 16-19.

Introduction

The lenten sermons of Father George Calciu, originally addressed to Orthodox seminarians and students in Romania, are just as appropriate to the young people of America and the Western world in general. His words will strike a responsive chord in the heart of any young person who is awake or ready to awaken to the call of Christ to this corrupt last generation of mankind.

In the Communist-dominated countries of the East this call is jammed by the atheist control of education, the press, and all the means of public expression. In the West there is little of such open persecution of faith in God, but the spiritual atmosphere is not as different from that of the East as it might seem. The same unbelief and unremitting worldliness are pounded into the heads and hearts of young people in the West in almost every public institution and medium; the same violence and rebellion disturb young souls that know no other way to express their need and frustration; and religion, although outwardly free, has become a private and subjective matter that does not move society as a whole and is generally seen by young people to have no particular power or significance for their lives. The name of Christ—unlike the situation in the East—can be freely pronounced, but most often it is associated with a religion of dead formalism or, at best, of subjective revivalism, and at worst of a self-centered exploitation of religious feeling.

The Christ of Father George Calciu is quite different. He calls to the suffering, longing but unfulfilled hearts of young people who would believe in the whole Christ of Orthodox faith if only they dared, or if only someone would dare to preach Him to them, together with the call to Christian commitment and acceptance of the path to salvation which He has given us in His Church.

These talks were originally given on the Wednesday evenings of Great Lent in 1978, in the chapel of the Bucharest Orthodox Seminary where Fr. George was a professor. They aroused great interest and controversy (as described partially in the Eighth Meditation), thereby revealing the potentiality for an Orthodox revival among the suffering Romanian people that is very close to what is happening in the Soviet Union, where the talks of Father Dimitry Dudko have had a similar effect.

Father George's situation in the Romanian Church (the new calendarist Patriarchate, the "official" Orthodox church of Romania) is virtually identical to the situation of Father Dimitry Dudko in Russia before the latter's arrest in 1980. He accepts the authority of his bishops but energetically preaches the truth and righteousness which they refrain from preaching because of their concordat with the Communist government; and in doing this he cannot help but criticize the bishops and question the very nature of their co-existence with the

government. He writes: "Should they (the bishops) truly be Christ's apostles on Romanian soil, then we will be their firm disciples. If one single bishop had been by our side, we would not have helped in the destruction of the Enea church."

As might have been expected, Father George was not left long to speak freely to the Orthodox youth of the Romanian Church. No stranger to Communist prisons (where he spent 18 years before being released in 1964), he was arrested again in March, 1979, and after severe and long beatings he was sentenced to ten years in prison. When his wife was allowed to see him in 1980 he was almost blind, severely emaciated, apparently drugged, and barely able to recognize her. He has been subjected since then to periodic interrogations and torture but has not broken down and "confessed." According to the most recent information, he was moved in 1981 to a prison in Bucharest and is apparently near death there at the age of 55.

While we in the free Russian Church Outside of Russia have no communion with the enslaved Patriarchate in Bucharest, our attitude towards fearless preachers of Christ's truth like Father George can only be positive, as the "Decision" of the Synod of Bishops has recommended with regard to the positive events within the Moscow Patriarchate ("Decision" of the Synod, Aug. 12/25, 1981; full text in The Orthodox Word, no. 98).

Orthodoxy today, despite the often serious differences that separate many of the local Churches, is still one, and a genuine spiritual manifestation in one Orthodox Church cannot but affect believers elsewhere. Thus, the voice of Father George is not for Romania only. What young man whose heart is burning with the love of Christ and His True Church in America—or any other land where Orthodoxy has taken root and begun to grow—will not be moved for his own people when he hears Father George say:

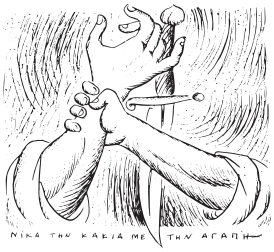
> "Our people are a ripe harvest, waiting to be gathered for Christ. But where are the worthy harvesters? Be harvesters! Be pastors! And above all, pray to God to give this nation good harvesters who will not love parents and children more than Christ."
>
> "If in a single year we were to see one thousand priests graduate, full of the spirit of sacrifice, priests as Christ would have them to be, then in less than one year the spiritual face of our country would be changed. "

One can only pray that the young Orthodox people of America, and all those whose hearts are ripe for genuine Orthodoxy, will pay heed to these messages from the suffering Orthodox soul under the atheist yoke and respond to them by shaking off the worldly enticements of these decadent times and at last taking seriously the Orthodox faith which is given too easily to us here, thus making the beginning of the genuine, committed Christianity which this land so desperately needs.

May it be so!

April 10

When a man detaches his mind from earth and opens it toward God with the desire to please Him, then God reveals His will in various ways. **St. Peter of Damascus** writes: *"If a man has a full intention to please God, then God teaches him His will either through thoughts, person, or through Holy Scripture."* Such a man becomes attentive and keen, and awaits God's promptings from within and from without. For him, chance ceases to exist. The whole world becomes as a ten-stringed harp, which does not give out a single sound without the finger of God.



Father George Calciu-Dumitreasa

Christ Is Calling You!

Seven Lenten Meditations

I/II

Sermons to young people by Father George Calciu-Dumitreasa
Given at the Chapel of the Romanian Orthodox Church
Seminary, Bucharest

Translation by *Keston College*, Kent, England

The Orthodox Word, 1982, Vol. 18, No. 1 (102), Jan-Feb, pp. 20–34

First Meditation

March 8th, 1978

The former treatise have I made,
O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began
both to do and teach.
Acts 1:1[34]

34 The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen: To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God: And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that

The time has come, young man, for you to hear a voice which has been calling you. It is a voice you have never heard before, or perhaps, one you have heard but which you have never understood or obeyed. It is the voice of Jesus!

Don't be shocked; don't be amazed, and don't smile incredulously, my young friend! The voice which calls you is not that of a dead man, but of One Who has risen from the dead. He does not shout after you from history, but from out of the depths of your own inner being. The words written and read from the New Testament today issue out of depths within you, yet unknown to you. Perhaps you have been ashamed or afraid to delve inside yourself and discover them. You believed that within you lay a wild beast, a sepulcher of instincts from which there would rise enchanting spirits. You did not see the face of an angel, and yet you are an angel. If this has never been told you before, Jesus is telling you now, and His testimony is true, for no one has ever caught Him in a lie.

What do you know about Christ? If all you know is what they taught you in atheism classes, you have been deprived in bad faith of a great truth—a truth which can set you free.

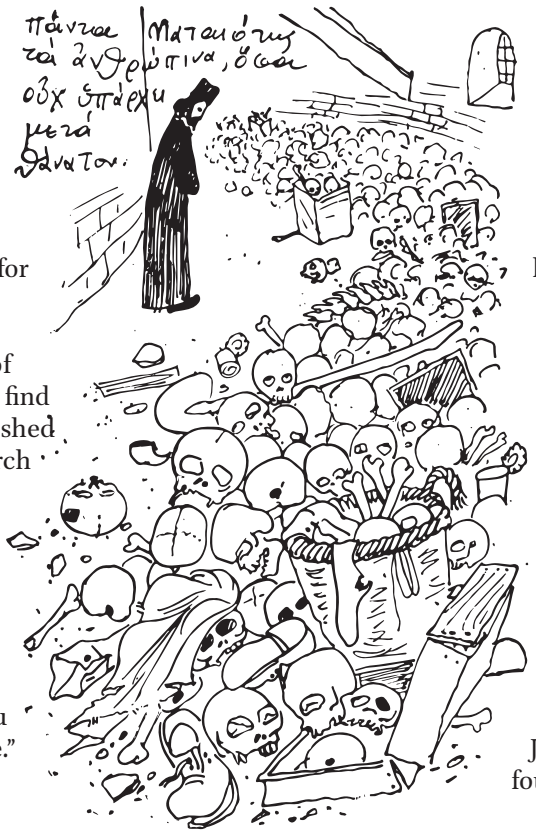
What do you know of the Church of Christ? If all you know can be reduced to the concepts of Giordano Bruno which were faithfully taught you in classes of so-called scientific atheism, then you

have been despitefully thwarted from experiencing the light of true culture and the brilliance of spirituality which assures human freedom. In your classes did you ever hear these words: "Love your enemies, bless those who curse you, and pray for those who despitefully use you and persecute you"?[35]

If you have never heard these words, my friend, who hindered you, and by what right? Who prohibited you from knowing that there exists a better way, juster and simpler than that on which you now wander blindly? Who has pulled the veil over your eyes so that you would not see the most wonderful light of the love of Jesus, proclaimed and lived out unto the final end?

Friend, I have seen you on the street, young, handsome. All of a sudden you change, your face becomes distorted, your instincts break loose as though under a spell and ravish your being in violence. Where did you learn such violence, young people? From whom? I have seen your mother meek and tearful and your father with his face stunned by pain. And I realize that you did not learn it from them. Then from where?

Lift up your ears and listen to the call of Jesus, the call of His Church. Outside of her, your unflinching violence will lead you to judgment and imprisonment, where your soul will be irrevocably destroyed. I have seen you in pain before the magistrates, where your actions have assumed horrific dimensions. I have seen you afraid, cynical, and full of bravado; and all these attitudes show me how near you are to the edge of destruction. And I ask myself once more: who bears the guilt for your fall?



Come to the Church of Christ! Only here will you find consolation for your ravished soul. Only in the Church will you find certainty, because only in the Church will you hear the voice of Jesus saying meekly to you: "Son, all your sins are forgiven. You have suffered much. Behold, I have made you whole; go and sin no more."

No man has ever said such words as these to you. Yet you hear them now. Rather, you have heard of class hatred, political hatred—always hatred. "Love" is a strange word to you, but now the Church of Christ shows the better way, the way of love. Up until this moment you were a slave of your instincts; your body was a simple instrument through which your instincts expressed themselves. But now you hear the words of Jesus, through His Apostle, pleading with you: Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? [1 Cor. 3 16][36].

You have been told that you descend from the apes, that you are a beast which must be trained; but discover another fact—the wonder that you are the temple of God; in you the Spirit of God dwells. You are called back to your dignity as a metaphysical being; you are raised up from the low place to which false education has sunk you, and you assume the sacred office of being the temple in which God dwells.

We call you to purity. If you have not forgotten the meaning of the word "innocence," if there is still an area within you of unaffected childhood, you will not resist this call. Come to the Church of Christ! And understand what innocence and purity mean, what meekness and love are. You will learn your place in life and the purpose of your existence. To your astonishment you will discover that our life does not end in death, but in resurrection; that our existence centers on Christ, and that this world is not a mere empty moment in which non-being prevails. You will receive hope. And your hope will make you strong. You will receive faith, and your faith will save you. You will receive love, and your love will make you good.

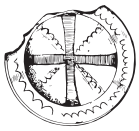
My friends, these are the first words which Jesus addresses to you in the midst of the turmoil of this world and the agitation of your passions. No man has taught you to fight your instincts, but Jesus calls you from out of the transparent dreams of innocence which still haunt you from time to time.

Jesus is seeking you; Jesus has found you!!

they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.
Acts 1 1–5

35 The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen: To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God: And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.
Acts 1 1–5

36 Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire. Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.
1 Corinthians 3 13–17



Second Meditation

March 15th, 1978

And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.
Matt. 16:18[37]

YOU REMEMBER, YOUNG person, how I told you last time that a new voice is calling and that this is the voice of Jesus? But from where and to what does He call you? What alluring promise to assuage your thirst for knowledge and truth does the Saviour make? The voice of Jesus calls you to His Church.

You live within a family, within a society, within a world. You are bound to your family by the unbreakable bond of blood, which you cannot reject and which seeks vengeance, if ever you betray it, through your suffering. You live in the midst of a people with which you feel to be one metaphysical entity—not a group of isolated individuals, but one immense and united soul in which you are the whole and in which the whole lives through you. And finally you exist in a world of suffering and joys to which you respond because something in you unites and binds you inextricably to all your fellow human beings.

Where then is the Church of Christ to which you are called? She is everywhere. She holds within her all human life, and more, she contains all heavenly beings too. For the Church knows no history; her history is the spiritual present. Family and society bear within them the tragic fate of their own limitations through the circumscription of history. History is, by definition, the chronology of unhappiness, yet the road to salvation. But you, my young friend, are called to the Church of Christ which was conceived in God's eternity and which bears within her perfection, just as the world bears within her her own limited nature. Society considers you as a simple constituting element, one brick lined up alongside other bricks. Your freedom is to function as a brick fixed once, for all time. Your freedom in society is the freedom of constraint and in this lies your drama. For your true freedom lies within you, but you do not know how to discover it in its true meaning, nor how to use it if you could discover it. You have been told that you are not free, that your freedom is the understanding of necessity and that necessity is imposed upon you from the outside by a foreign element. You are just like a lifeless construction.

In contrast, the Church of Christ is alive and free. In her we move and have our being, through Christ Who is her Head. In Him we have full freedom. In the Church we learn of truth and the truth will set us free (John 8 32)[38]. You are in Christ's Church whenever you uplift someone bent down in sorrow, or when you give alms to the poor and visit the sick. You are in Christ's Church when you cry out: "Lord, help me." You are in Christ's Church when you are good and patient, when you refuse to get angry at your brother, even if he has wounded your feelings. You are in Christ's Church when you pray: "Lord, forgive him." When you work honestly at your job, returning home weary in the evenings but with a smile upon your lips, when you repay evil with love—you are in Christ's Church.

Do you not see, therefore, young friend, how close the Church of Christ is? You are Peter and God is building His Church upon you. You are the rock of His Church against which nothing can prevail. You are a liberated rock, a soul that is fulfilled within His Church, and not one condemned to stagnation. Let us build churches with our faith. Churches which no human power can pull down. A church whose foundation is Christ. Let us build churches in our enlightened hearts where there shines the bright Sun of Righteousness, Who is Christ Himself, He Who has told us that by faith we are free from sin.

Feel for your brother alongside you. Never ask: "Who is he?" Rather say: "He is no stranger; he is my brother, He is the Church of Christ just as I am."

Friend, you look behind you and you tremble with fear. But look ahead; rejoice. History is a series of ossified events in which from time to time living

37 He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.
Matthew 16 15–19

38 Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.
John 8 31–32

39 A church destroyed by the Romanian Communist government.

40 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking

testimonies of princely faith have been raised, now embodied in churches and monasteries. These are treasures of the Romanian, Christian soul. They are the spirit which gives life to our national identity. All which falls outside this spirituality is destined to perish. Mountains have been levelled, forests burnt down, and people have died, but churches have remained alive and monasteries continue as censers offering a continuous smoke of prayer to heaven. If we destroy the churches which express the national identity, we cannot affirm the continuity of a Romanian spirituality, nor can we sustain that we have preserved unaltered the tradition and soul of Romania. There are no references to Romanian princes destroying the foundation of churches, or of Michael the Brave ordering the disappearance overnight of an Enea Church[39]. No. Nor can any scientific atheism or scientific argument stop you, dear friend, from inquiring about the meaning of life, and about God and salvation.

This search is the proof of your freedom in the face of any constraint, and in the face of matter. It is your road to the Church, the gate through which you will enter into her. Do not waver on the doorstep, friend. Come in! How long will you stand in the shadows of the Church without knowing her? How many years will you hear the voice of Jesus saying to you: "He who comes unto Me, I will not cast out?"

The world will throw you on one side. It oppresses you and alienates you. Jesus wants to receive you, comfort you and return you back to yourself. Come and build churches with us. Let us reconstruct in our own souls an Enea Church, princely, Christ-centered, alive and immortal, until we see in truth a steadfast witness to our Christian faith and to our national identity raised up again on her site.

Without church or monasteries we are aliens. Whoever destroys churches, destroys the substance of our material and spiritual endurance on this land given to us by God. Young man, you are no longer alone; you belong to Christ's Church.

for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.
2 Peter 3 10–14

41 Princes have persecuted me without a cause: but my heart standeth in awe of thy word. I rejoice at thy word, as one that findeth great spoil. I hate and abhor lying: but thy law do I love. Seven times a day do I praise thee because of thy righteous judgments. Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them.
Psalm 119:161-65

Third Meditation

March 22nd, 1978

We, according to His promise,
look for new heavens and a new
earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.
2 Peter 3 13[40]

YOUNG MAN, I am speaking with you again today because I have chosen you from all those to whom I could be speaking, for you are most ready to hear the Word of Christ. You are noble and pure. Atheist education has not yet managed to darken heaven within you. You still look upward, you still can hear calls from exalted places. There is no grounding the soaring of your spirit towards the heavenly spheres through the propagation of arbitrary concepts. The desire for heaven still exists within you. Materialism has not made you its prisoner.

Thus I call you seven times, young man. Seven are the praises of the day toward God, according to the Psalmist: *Seven times a day have I praised Thee for the judgments of Thy righteousness* [Ps. 119:164][41].

Today we will speak of heaven and earth. I will not frighten you with colorful descriptions of the end of the world. We stand before death daily. Its presence is more suffocating than life itself. For it is more real than life. Death is our nightmare by day and by night. You live with death by your side, friend, and yet you have not grown accustomed to its presence because you are alive and authentic-more alive and real than you think.

Heaven and earth—the concepts remind me of a poem I once heard recited by the poet himself on the television. He held his right arm up as he spoke. His face was a picture of forced inspiration and his voice recited in a monotone. He was trying to induce some kind of trance among his hearers that they might imitate him. Each verse was supported by a chorus of children chanting an artificial litany spontaneously prescribed: "Can you count us, heaven, one, two.. three…" and so forth up to ten. It was a curse, a defiance, thrown up at heaven. The poem was essentially saying that heaven might be able to count the poet and his companions one, two, three …—good and well, but it could not overcome them. That was the gist of it. He was an atheist poet; suited for the materialists.

42 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. Genesis 1:1–2

But to which heaven did he address himself? Was it to the regions made up of the successive strata of the atmosphere? If so, his monologue was senseless. The poet was obviously addressing someone who could hear and even count, at least that is what one surmises from the conviction with which he spoke. How strange!

For it was not a matter of inventing a trivial personification for the sake of the poem's rhythm, but the poet himself actually believed in the depth of his being that his appeal or invocation was being heard and that it was an act of heroism. He addressed the metaphysical heaven which tortures him, diminishes him and denies his affirmation. It is this heaven I want to talk to you about, my friend.

In the beginning God made the heaven and the earth [Genesis 1 1][42]. He created a heaven and an earth, an imminent and a transcendent, a given material and an aspiration after perfection, a temporal space and a spaceless, timeless existence. From the moment of creation to the present we keep within ourselves the nostalgic memory of our integration with God's heaven. We have never forgotten that there is a place in heaven to which we, or rather heaven within us, aspire.

Tell me, young man, how much have you believed the statements which you have heard repeatedly to the point of obsession, at school, on the radio, on television, in the newspapers and at young people's meetings—that say that you descend from monkeys? And how honored this revelation has made you feel! Noam Chomsky has said that the most stupid human beings can learn to speak, but the most intelligent monkey has never reached such a height of achievment.

You are heaven and earth; darkness and light; sin and grace. I know, friend, that you are tortured by questions concerning the meaning of your life in this world, and on the purpose of the world in general. Do the ready-made authoritarian statements in answer to your limited question satisfy you: namely that heaven is a fiction and matter is everything? "It is matter speaking to you through your internal and external senses." Matter organized its own structure and evolution by certain laws of great complexity before even the slightest rudiment of the human brain was formed. Thus once the higher brain of man appeared—the only method for matter to recognize itself—it could not recognize itself any longer. And from that time until now human intelligence has been struggling in a sterile and vain effort to discover laws which heed matter fixed in a period when there was nothing but darkness and non-consciousness!

What do you think of this joke of non-intelligence which stuns all human intelligence, even that of the collective? Do you not see that the most elementary logic obliges you to admit the presence of an intelligence outside of this world?

But I call you to a much higher flight; to total abandonment; to an act of courage which defies reason. I call you to God. To the One that transcends the world so that you might know an infinite heaven of spiritual joy, the heaven which you presently grope for in your personal hell, and which you seek even whilst in a state of nondeliberate revolt.

This heaven with its divine hierarchy and its divine light gradually descending only to return to its source which is God, does not count us in twos or fives or tens. For my friend, you are not a piece in a machine which drives you round; in the eyes of heaven you are a soul, a whole being, so free in your actions, so priceless in your worth, that God Himself, in the guise of the Second Person of the Trinity, came into the world to be crucified for you.

How ridiculous to you the poet's curse seems. He believed so much in heaven that he needed to have a chorus of children to hide behind as a shield! Do not believe in the all-powerful nature of matter. This earth is finite. We can destroy matter in minutes through fission and achieve oblivion if we do not recognize the presence of God. The absolute claims of materialism are supported on a limited premise. You will see that the attributes of matter are purely spiritual notions—such as infinity, eternity and self-creation.

To deny the existence of heaven is to deny all existence which does not fall into the orbit of my feelings. It means that I admit that for those moments when I close my eyes or block my ears, the world becomes non-existent.

And now I want to recite to you the most beautiful poem ever written about heaven and earth: *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made. In Him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.* [John 1:1–5]

How can darkness confine light, or matter confine the spirit, or atheism destroy faith and constrain freedom? The heavens number you one by one; for each of you is a unique irrepeatable creation: man.

Fourth Meditation

March 29th, 1978

He that hateth Me hateth
My Father also.
John 15:23[43]

So, my dear friend, we have reached the halfway mark in our series: we are half way along the road on which we started together that first Wednesday of the Lenten Fast. On that occasion the call of Jesus resounded for the first time in your ears, bent hungry for truth. You received it and your soul, yearning for the absolute, followed it.

At that point I was alone, but I knew that my voice was not "one crying in the wilderness," for the words were those of Jesus. I knew that the words with which I called you would penetrate your ears: "Prepare ye the way of the Lord; make straight His way into your hearts." And I was not mistaken. For look, how many we are today—a witness, even if only within your hearts, to faith in Christ and to love for one another.

Why have I been calling you, my friend, and why have I put my soul into your hands, young person? Why have I believed in you to the point of implicating you in my actions of faith, and even to the point of placing my very life on the line for you?

Why? Because my spirit knew your soul even before you heard my words or even before we set eyes on each other. I knew of your disquiet and troubles, your unhappiness and suffering. I understood long ago that your badness was but a shield against the world, and that your bravado was but a defence for your wounds. For you are my friend. We are bound together by a free friendship which no one and nothing can destroy. Our freedom is guaranteed by Jesus Himself, and our love is founded upon the Resurrected One Who said: *Henceforth I call you not servants, for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth; hut I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard of My Father I have made known unto you* [John 15:15][44].

Who has ever confessed such truths to you? You are surrounded on all sides by an atmosphere of secrecy, as within a conspiracy devised by "those above." A selective system will prevent anything reaching you other than that which subjugates you to a certain idea or imposed concept. Where is your freedom to choose and where is your power of word? Where is the exercise of that noble freedom given to you by God which is the basis of your satisfaction in responding to history? Why then am I amazed that you do not know what this freedom is, or how to use it? Why should I be amazed that you know nothing of friendship or love, nor to whom to give it nor how to preserve it?

Who has been your friend in this world, or who has given up their soul for you? In every social group to which you belong, you are always excluded by the fundamental arguments themselves which justify its existence as a social phenomenon. Every exclusion based on these grounds puts you in the position of a slave. It is a social and philosophical secret which you are far from understanding. You are offered only the conclusion. Yet if your are unfit to learn the road by which the conclusion came, how can you be fit to know the conclusion itself? And if you are fit to know the way, then why the mystery? Is someone afraid of your right to judge? or of your freedom? or of your friendship? Could religion or faith be an object of prohibition?

Slavery to ideas is as serious a form of slavery as any other. Through His Church, Jesus offers you the deep mystery of His Divinity and His friendship. You are no longer called a slave but a friend if you discover the mystery of divine things.

You have avoided choosing Jesus as your friend for too long. Perhaps you were afraid of the ocean of spiritual freedom into which you would have to dive. But Jesus has chosen you to hear His voice. He did so a long time ago: *You have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain* [John 15 16]. The choice was made long ago, for Jesus has always loved you, but now you have the choice to respond to His invitation. In responding you are ordained to go and bear fruit that will remain.

43 If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me. If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke for their sin. He that hateth me hateth my Father also. If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father. But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause.
John 15 18–25

44 This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you. Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.
John 15 12–16

45 The Party youth paper, *trans*. t

To be a prophet of Christ in the world in which you live. To love your neighbor as yourself and to make all men your friend. To proclaim by every action this unique and limitless love which has raised man from the level of a serf to that of a friend of God. To be the prophet of this liberating love which delivers you from all constraint, returning to you your integrity as you offer yourself to God.

The most humiliating bondage is that which forbids you any theological flight, any attempt to transcend the immanent and its captivity. "You are a slave of my will," it seems to say to you, "and my will forbids you to believe in anything other than what I direct you to believe."

Why are you forbidden the right to leave the space in which you are kept a prisoner of feelings and reason? Why is only that which belongs to this dimension imposed upon you as reality and the rest dismissed and decreed as fiction? And subsequently, why are you not directed to penetrate this so-called fiction with your own knowledge and thus shatter it? Is it that there lies somewhere the fear that this "fiction" is more real than that which is imposed upon you as "reality?"

A philosophical or theological system, especially if it is a way of life, cannot be destroyed from outside. From that point of view it remains unassailable to its opponent. Phrases like "religion is the opium of the people," or "religion was created by the exploiting classes," cannot even raise a smile today. They are purely and simply ignored.

Yet you, for you are young, are asked to take seriously the half-baked arguments of the atheist bible (*Hazlie*) or the anti-catechism from *Scînteia Tineretului*[45] which hold fast only because of the prohibition preventing you from responding to them. On the social level, freedom means the struggle for ideas. But in Christ it means liberation from sin and death.

In our country atheism takes a forced course, becoming more and more narrow. Its life springs from the authority of the state. Faith, however, is on full wing, for it is a fact of life. Authoritarianism creates bondage, life gives freedom.

I read in *Contemporanul* (November 11, 1977) an article entitled "With atheists on religion." The article contained declarations by young people in an interview carried out by the magazine reporter. Every investigation into religion is for us a source of disquiet and fear because, according to officialdom, to be a believer is tantamount to betrayal of one's country. Nevertheless, in this interview the young people, who were all Party members, replied according to their beliefs, and their faith made them free. I suggest that you all read this article in *Contemporanul*—the official literary organ of the materialist ideology of the Romanian

Communist Party. You will read there that the young people are free from the bondage of theory. That would have made them hide their true faith and declare formal statements about atheism. They overcame their instinct of self-preservation and affirmed publicly and courageously their faith and the freedom to choose for faith. They chose openly the Church and Christ. All were young people like you, my friend, as good and generous as you, as brave as you. They were our friends. As a consequence some of you wrote them precious words of encouragement, through which you wanted to tell them that they were not alone, that the best believe as they do, love as they do, and wish to express themselves as freely as they have done.

Friend, this is the eternal love of Christ. Our faith in Him binds us together as One Body. Our common friendship binds us together, for we are all Christ's friends. Do not be afraid to affirm that you are His friend. Do not be afraid to reject an atheist ideology which has no other aim than to kill your soul as a metaphysical entity, or even to cripple it within you.

Do not be afraid to affirm that our people has been Orthodox Christian since its inception. And that 20 or 30 years of enforced atheism and imposed materialist propaganda cannot stop our people's aspiration after the absolute.

Believe and love. Faith will make you free; love will unite you. You will be free in union with Jesus, and you will abide in His love.

See how high you have soared, my friend. You are now a friend of Christ! For this I love you, young person; for this I believe in you.

Riassaphore-monk Adrian

The Life And Works Of Our Holy Father Archimandrite Justin Of Chelije

Commemorated March 25 (†1979)

The Orthodox Word, Vol. 43, No. 5 (256), Sept.-Oct, 2007, pp. 212–226

The mission of the Church is to make every one of her faithful, organically and in person, one with the Person of Christ.

Fr. Justin Popovich[46]

With the words of the Archangel Gabriel, Rejoice, thou who art full of grace, the Lord is with thee [Luke 1:28][47], the Lord chose to frame the life of our holy Father Justin. He was born at midnight on the feast of the Annunciation, March 25, 1894, and eighty-five years later he reposed on the same day. In that period, he ceaselessly proclaimed the good news of the Incarnation of the God-man Christ. As a second Gabriel, he announced these tidings to a world grown weary with the wars and modernity of the twentieth century. With absolute conviction, Fr. Justin could personally bear testimony that "man learns the complete truth about man, about the purpose and meaning of his existence only through the God-man. Outside of Him a man turns into an apparition, into a scarecrow, into nonsense. Instead of a man you find the dregs of a man, the fragments of a man, the scraps of a man. Therefore, true manhood lies only in God-manhood; and no other manhood exists under heaven."[48]

Fr. Justin was born in Vranjc, southern Serbia, and given the name Blagoje in honor of the day of his birth: the feast of the Annunciation[49]? His pious and God-fearing parents, Protopresbyter Spyridon and Protinica Anastasija Popovich, imbued him with reverence and piety from early childhood. Fr. Spyridon was the seventh generation of Popoviches to be ordained to the priesthood—the priestly rank being reflected even in the family name Popovich, "family or son of a priest."

As a child, Blagoje and his parents often visited the Prohor Pchinjski Monastery, dedicated to St. Prohor the Miracle-worker. There, when he was still a young boy, he witnessed the miraculous healing of his mother from a deadly disease through the intercession of St. Prohor.

From elementary school, Blagoje was an excellent student, but his greatest love was for the Bible, and the four Gospels in particular. Even at this early age, Blagoje perceived that education without Christ was no true education. Later, he would write:

46 "The Inward Mission of Our Church" in *Orthodox Faith and Life in Christ* (Belmonr, Mass.: Institute for Byzantine and Modem Greek Studies, 1994), p. 23.

47 And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be. And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. Luke 1:26–30

48 "The God-man: The Foundation of the Truth of Orthodoxy" in *A Treasury of Serbian Orthodox Spirituality*, vol. 4, *The Struggle for Faith* (Grayslake, Ill.: Serbian Orthodox Diocese of the United States of America and Canada, 1989), pp. 96–97

49 *Blagovest* means Annunciation or Good News in Serbian.

> Let us ask what the goal of education is, if it is not the enlightening of man, the illumining of all his abysses and pits, the banishing of all darkness from him. How can man disperse the cosmic darkness that assails him from all sides, and how can he banish the darkness from his being without that one light, without God, without Christ? Even with all the light that is his, man without God is but a firefly in the endless darkness of this universe. His science, his philosophy, education, culture, technology and civilization are but tiny candles that he lights in the obscurity of earthly and cosmic events. What do all these tiny candles mean in the endless night and the darkness of individual, social, national and international problems and events?[50]

At the age of fourteen, Blagoje began reading the Bible in earnest, and throughout the rest of his life he always carried the New Testament with him, reading faithfully three chapters a day. His deep understanding of the mysteries of the Gospels through a life lived in them gave him the authority to instruct others in this occupation:

> It is a book that must be read with life—by putting it into practice. One should first live it, and then understand it... Do it, so that you may understand it. This is the fundamental rule of Orthodox exegesis.[51]

In 1905 young Blagoje entered the nine-year program of secular and religious study at the Seminary and Faculty of St. Sava in Belgrade. At that time, entry into the seminary was extremely difficult. Out of the thousands of students who applied, only about one hundred were admitted. On all of his entry exams Blagoje received the grade of "Excellent," and he maintained this academic standard for the rest of his seminary education.

The Belgrade Seminary was renowned as a holy place of asceticism and for its high standard of scholarship. Among its many excellent instructors, Bishop Nikolai (Velimirovich)—then a hieromonk—stood out as a beacon of sanctity and erudition. Fr. Nikolai was Blagoje's spiritual father during his years as a seminarian and became, without a doubt, the single most influential person in his life. In later years Fr. Justin would refer to him as "the thirteenth apostle and the fifth evangelist."

It was during this period that Blagoje came to love the works of Dostoevsky, whose works would be the subject of his thesis at Oxford. In his biography of Fr. Justin, Bishop Atanasije (Yevtich) writes:

> Dostoevsky ... was really his [Fr. Justin's] unique "teacher and tormentor," as he himself would say. And this was because they both encountered and collided with the same eternal problems, and only in Christ did both of them find, uncover, and experience the resolution of their tormenting questions and discover the only salvific way out of all the desperate situations and the tragedy of human life.

He also came to love St. John Chrysostom and his works at this time. It was a veneration that would continue throughout his life. In a journal entry for 1923 he wrote:

> O dear father Chrysostom, every thought about thee is a feast for me, and a joy for me, and paradise, and rapture, and help, and healing, and resurrection... The holy Chrysostom is the eternal dawn of my soul and of the whole Orthodox Church. He is a most beloved intercessor; he is a most articulate God-given tongue of earth to heaven, through whom the earth conveys to heaven its sighs, its pains, its hopes, and its prayers.

In 1914, at age twenty, Blagoje finished the nine-year program of St. Savas in Belgrade. His greatest desire now was to dedicate his life fully to Christ and take the monastic vows. His parents, however, were completely opposed to this, and petitioned both the bishop of Nish and Metropolitan Dimitrije [52] of Belgrade to forbid the tonsure.

Although his resolution remained firm, the outbreak of World War I in 1914 forced Blagoje to put aside his own desires in order to serve his country. In the autumn of 1914, Blagoje joined a student brigade of medical orderlies in Nish. At that time the entire country was occupied by the Austrians. The deprivations were great in that region, and Blagoje contracted typhus during the following winter and had to spend over a month in a hospital. On January' 8, 1915, he resumed his duties and followed the retreating Serbian army into the Skadar region.

On the eve of the feast of St. Basil the Great, January 1, 1916, Blagoje received the monastic tonsure with the blessing of Metropolitan Dimitrije in the church in Skadar, taking the name Justin, after the great Christian philosopher and martyr for Christ, St. Justin the Philosopher (†166). According to his disciple, Metropolitan Amphilohije:

> Fr. Justin was a philosopher in the true sense of the word. That is why he probably chose the name of Justin the Philosopher, a martyr,

50 "Humanistic and Theanthropic Education" in *The Orthodox Church and Ecumenism* (Birmingham, England: Lazarica Press, 2000), p. 136.

51 "How to Read the Bible and Why" in *A Treasury of Serbian Orthodox Spirituality*, vol. 4, The Struggle for Faith, p. 78.

52 In 1920 Metropolitan Dimitrije would become the first Patriarch of the restored Patriarchal throne.

> and strived all his life to emulate him, both in philosophy and martyrdom... However, his philosophy was not philosophy according to human understanding... In all of his works, in all of his prayers, in all of his sighs, in a word—with his entire life, Fr. Justin strove to sing, to express, to describe with words the indescribable image of Christ, to express his own volcanic love for the God-man Christ.[53]

Metropolitan Dimitrije then sent Fr. Justin and three of his fellow students to the St. Petersburg Seminary in Russia. These measures were taken to spare the lives of these talented young men, who would be of enormous need to the Serbian land after the war.

Arriving during the last days of Holy Russia before the revolution, the young and talented Fr. Justin was inspired by the deep piety of the Russian people and the spiritual inheritance they had received. Although his stay was short, his sojourn there influenced the rest of his life.

With the storm of the Bolshevik Revolution on the horizon, Fr. Justin was forced to leave Russia and, at the prompting of his spiritual father, Bishop Nikolai, prepared to study theology in Oxford, England. He spent seven semesters at Oxford—from November 1916 to May 1919. During this period he became intimately familiar with Western culture and Western man. According to Bishop Atanasije: "He did not oppose Western scholarship and science as such, as much as its unhealthy rationalism penetrated with sin, which demoralizes man, making him solipsistic, closing him up within himself, binding him only to this world and life." And so, for his doctoral dissertation he turned to the works of Dostoevsky, in whom "he found only a confirmation of his own personal experience of man as Eastern Orthodoxy experiences man and as Western Christianity distorts man." In the last chapter of his dissertation, "The Philosophy and Religion of Dostoevsky," Fr. Justin entered into sharp criticism of Western humanism and anthropocentrism, especially that of Roman Catholicism. The English professors demanded from him a change of such views. This, however, was inconceivable for Fr. Justin, and thus he left Oxford without a diploma.

Western humanism and its effect on man would be a subject that Fr. Justin would return to throughout his life:

> What is left of a man when the soul is removed from his body? A corpse. What is left of Europe when God is torn from its body? A corpse. With God banished from the cosmos, has it not become a corpse? What is a man who denies the soul within him and in the world around him? Nothing but molded clay, a walking coffin of clay. The result is devastating. Enamored of things, European man himself finally becomes a "thing." Personality is devalued and destroyed. What is left is a man-thing. There is no whole, integrated, immortal and God-like man, but simply fragments of a man, a bodily husk from which the immortal spirit has been driven out. Although this husk is burnished and adorned, it is still a husk. European culture has deprived man of his soul; it has made him artificial and mechanical. It is like a monstrous machine that devours men and makes them into things. The end result is touchingly sad and movingly tragic: man, a soulless thing among soulless things.[54]

In May 1919 Fr. Justin returned to Serbia—now absorbed into the newly created Yugoslavia—to teach theology at the St. Sava Orthodox Seminary in Sremski Karlovci. Later that year Fr. Justin was sent to the Orthodox School of Theology in Athens to complete his doctoral work. This time his dissertation, "The Mystery of Personality and Knowledge According to St. Macarius of Egypt," was successfully defended. Just as in Russia, Monk Justin traveled throughout the countryside of Greece, benefiting spiritually from the Orthodox Byzantine tradition.

In 1920 Fr. Justin was ordained a deacon. As his liturgical and ascetical life deepened, Fr. Justin matured spiritually and became known throughout Greece as a devout ascetic. Even while he was still in Oxford this transformation had already begun. A young Anglican monk who became a close acquaintance of his, observing his unceasing prayer and abundant tears, sincerely admitted one day, "I only now understand that the repentance and faith you have is something different from what we understand in the West and how we've been taught. Now I see that we in the West don't know what repentance is."

Deacon Justin returned to Sremski Karlovci and resumed his teaching duties at the Seminary in May 1921. Desiring to convey to the seminarians how Orthodox theology is lived, he called for the introduction of a course on the Lives of the Saints. With the establishment of this course, he began translating these Lives into modern Serbian for his students. This would be the impetus for Fr. Justin's lifelong undertaking: to translate twelve volumes of the Lives of the Saints from the Greek, Slavonic, and Syriac sources. Published between 1972 and

53 Hieromonk Amphilohije (Radovich) [now Metropolitan of Montenegro], "Eulogy in Memory' of Father Justin" in *Orthodox Life*, 1981, no. 2, p. 28.

54 "Humanistic and Theanthropic Culture" in *The Orthodox Church and Ecumenism*, pp. 103-4.

1977, these texts amount to over seven thousand pages of writing. In his introduction to the twelve volumes, Fr. Justin eloquently writes of the importance of the saints in every Christians life:

> The Lives of the Saints are nothing else but the life of the Lord Christ, repeated in every saint to a greater or lesser degree in this or that form. More precisely it is the life of the Lord Christ continued through the saints, the life of the incarnate God the Logos, the God-man Jesus Christ who became man. This was so that as man He could give and transmit to us His Divine life; so that as God by His life He could sanctify and make immortal and eternal our human life on earth.[55]

55 "Introduction to the *Lives of the Saints*" in *Orthodox Faith and Life in Christ*, p. 36.

In addition to the Lives of the Saints, Fr. Justin lectured on the New Testament, Dogmatics, and Patristics. Prior to each lesson on the Scriptures he opened with this short prayer: "O Most Sweet Lord, by the power of Thy Holy Gospel and through Thine Apostles, teach me and announce through me what I am to say."

In 1922 on the Feast of the Beheading of St. John the Baptist, Fr. Justin was ordained a priest by His Holiness Patriarch Dimitrije. Throughout his ordination, Fr. Justin was in tears, crying as a newborn babe in the Lord. The date of his ordination was fitting, as his life would in many ways follow the path of the first evangelist and Christian confessor.

Fr. Justins fame as a man of prayer began to spread, and people from all walks of life came to him for Confession and counsel, including students, intellectuals, peasants, and members of his beloved *Bogomoljak Pokret* (Serbian Prayer Movement), originally formed and led by his spiritual father, Bishop Nikolai.

The zealous Fr. Justin was also in close contact at this time with two great Russian Orthodox pastors: Metropolitan Anthony Khrapovitsky, who taught at the Seminary in Sremski Karlovci, and St. John of Shanghai and San Francisco, at that time a hieromonk.

In 1922 Fr. Justin helped to found the Orthodox journal *Christian Lif*e, and the following year he would become its editor. In this journal appeared his first doctoral dissertation, "The Philosophy and Religion of Dostoevsky," for which he had been censured at Oxford. Fr. Justin used his position as editor to call for the return of Serbs to a true Orthodox life in Christ. In issues ranging from the secularization of state schools to the innovations proposed at the Pan-Orthodox Congress at Constantinople, Fr. Justin was adamant in his position that man could only be a complete and whole man in the light of Christ the God-man.

Not everyone was pleased with Fr. Justins work as editor of *Christian Life*. Certain archpastors were stung by some of his writings and desired to bring him before the Holy Synod for trial, but the Patriarch freed him of this, replying that everything that Fr. Justin wrote was the truth.

In defense of himself and the articles he had published, Fr. Justin wrote in uncompromising terms, "There are some that are calling for reforms in the Church, not sensing that all reforms that are in the spirit of the times are pernicious for the Orthodox Church."

In 1931 after briefly teaching at the seminary in Prizren, Fr. Justin accompanied Bishop Joseph (Cvijovich) to Czechoslovakia in order to reorganize the Church of the Carpatho-Russians. There he worked tirelessly, bringing back great numbers of Uniates to the Orthodox Faith. On his return, because of his success, he was offered a bishopric in a newly revived diocese in Czechoslovakia. In the end, he refused the offer and was instead sent to teach at the seminary in Bitol.

His experience in Czechoslovakia with the Uniates convinced him of the need for an exact and complete exposition of the Orthodox Faith in modern Serbian. As a result, he began writing his greatest work, *The Orthodox Philosophy of Truth: The Dogmatics of the Orthodox Church*, in three volumes. Volume one, published in late 1932, dealt with the sources and method of theology, the nature of God and the teaching on the Holy Trinity, creation, and divine providence. The success of this volume led to his appointment as professor of Holy Scripture, Dogmatics, and Comparative Theology at the Theological Faculty (Belgrade University). In 1935 the second volume, entitled *The God-man and His Work: Christology and Soteriology* was published. Fr. Justins Dogmatics became a standard textbook for seminaries not only in Yugoslavia but also in Greece, Bulgaria, and the United States. His knowledge of Hebrew, Syriac, Greek, Latin, Russian, Romanian, and many Western European languages, combined with his ascetical vision of life, produced for all Christians a magnificent analysis of the ancient Faith of the Church. The third and final volume, *Ecclesiology: Teaching on the Church*, was published many years later, in 1978.

In 1936 while a professor of the theological faculty, Fr. Justin had a vision of St. Seraphim of Sarov. The

saint, wearing priestly vestments, approached him in a dream. Fr. Justin joyfully went to him, stretching out his hands and wanting to touch him, but St. Seraphim withdrew from him. "My soul was both joyful and sad at this. Joyful because I had seen him, and sad, because he had so quickly disappeared."

In the late 1930s Fr. Justin turned his attention to missionary work among the Serbian intellectuals of Belgrade. He co-founded the Serbian Philosophical Society in 1938, and in the following two years published *The Foundations of Theology and Dostoevsky on Europe and Slavism*. Both of these works dealt with the nature and method of theology, and the problematic spirit and vision of Western civilization.

At the end of World War II, the newly installed Communist government forced Fr. Justin—a vocal anti-Communist—to leave his teaching position at Belgrade University. Fr. Justin's influence on Serbian society, and especially the intellectuals, was in direct opposition to the plans of the atheist state. For two years after his exile from Belgrade, Fr. Justin moved from monastery to monastery in Serbia—to Kalenich, Ovchar, Sukovo, and Ravanica—and on May 14, 1948, he entered the Chelije-Archangel Michael Monastery in western Serbia.

When Fr. Justin arrived, the monastery was in shambles. There were only two habitable cells—one for Fr. Justin and the other for the few nuns who had been sent to reestablish monastic life in 1946. For both the nuns and Fr, Justin, life at Chelije was austere, characterized by poverty, prayer, and hard labor. They worked the arable land with bullocks, replanted the devastated forest, and with the help of the local people rebuilt the monastery. In addition to all the physical hardships, the Communist government kept Fr. Justin under constant surveillance as he continued to attract visitors from all over the Balkans and even the far corners of the world.

According to one of his spiritual children, he remained an ascetic until the time of his repose:

> After dinner Fr. Justin would go to his workroom where he would read Holy Scripture, the Holy Fathers, and pray. He slept very little. He would get up very early and go to the monastery church to serve the Divine Services. Following this he would eat breakfast and return to his work—studying, translating and writing. When he grew old, he would rest for a short while after lunch and then return to his work. Every day would bring guests to see En Justin, who would find time to give them precious spiritual advice. When the evening arrived, he would return to the Church to serve, after which the holy mystery of Confession would be offered to all.[56]

For Fr. Justin the ascetic life was an integral part of his faith, and he called upon every Christian to follow this path:

> Orthodoxy is ascetic effort and it is life, and it is thus by effort and by life that Orthodoxy's mission is broadcast and accomplished. The development of asceticism—this ought to be the inward mission of our Church amongst our people. The parish must become an ascetic focal point. But this can only be achieved by an ascetic priest. Prayer and fasting, the Church-oriented life of the parish, a life of liturgy: Orthodoxy holds these as the primary ways of effecting rebirth in its people. The parish, the parish community, must be regenerated and in Christ-like and brotherly love must minister humbly to Him and to all people, meek and lowly and in a spirit of sacrifice and self-denial. And such service must be imbued and nourished by prayer and the liturgical life. This much is groundwork and indispensable. But to this end there exists one prerequisite: that our bishops, priests, and our monks become ascetics themselves.[57]

Fr. Justin would remain in Chelije Monastery to the end of his life. He was raised to the rank of archimandrite there, and was the spiritual head of the monastery. A school of iconography, renewing the Serbo— Byzantine style, was begun there, and a new chapel dedicated to St. John Chrysostom as well as residential quarters were constructed in 1970.

In addition to completing his monumental work, *The Lives of the Saints*, while at Chelije, Fr. Justin continued to produce an immense number of books and articles, including: Commentaries on all

56 "Father Justin Popovich: The Hidden Conscience of Orthodox," An Interview with Father Peter Milosevich, *Divine Ascent,* vol. 1, no. 1 (1997), pp. 42–43.

57 "The Inward Mission of Our Church" in *Orthodox Faith and Life in Christ*, p. 30.

58 Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God. Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, (Touch not; taste not; handle not; Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men? Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh.
Colossians 2:18–23

59 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.
Ephesians 4 11–16

60 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and

the Epistles of St. Paul and St. John, Commentaries on the Gospels of Matthew and John, *The Way of St. Sava as a Philosophy of Life* (1953), *The Lives of Sts. Sava and Simeon* (1962), *Man and the God-Man* (1969, in Greek), *The Orthodox Church and Ecumenism* (1974), *Three Divine Liturgies* (1978), and *The Divine-human Way* (posthumously in 1980).

Despite Ft. Justin's exile to a remote monastery, he remained a pillar of the Church, never afraid to call the faithful back to the Church's true mission. He was unflagging in his condemnation of ecumenism, while at the same time he labored to heal the rift in the Serbian diaspora in North America, calling for forgiveness and repentance in order to create true reconciliation.

In 1977 Fr. Justins health began to fail, and at the end of March 1979 he prepared to enter eternity. Until the end he remained conscious. He was able to take leave of the entire monastery and his spiritual children, blessing each one. St. Justin reposed on. March 25, 1979, on his birthday, rhe Feast of the Annunciation. He was eighty-five years of age. A great multitude filled the small Chelijc Monastery for Fr. Justin's funeral, including three bishops and hundreds of mourners from as far away as Greece, Crete, Germany and France. He was laid to rest facing east behind the main church of Chelije Monastery.

Fr. Justin left behind a powerful testimony of his life: the thousands of pages of his pastoral, dogmatic, hagiographical, and theological works—writings that were the fruit of a faith fervently lived. His words continue to inspire new generations, and his intercessions before the throne of God are evident to those who pray at his grave. May the time soon come when he will be formally listed among the saints.

Holy Father Justin, pray to God for us!

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April 11

"*There can be no rest for those on earth who desire to be saved,*" says **St. Ephraim the Syrian**. The struggle is unceasing, be it either external or internal. The adversary acts at times visibly, through men and other things, and at other times invisibly, through thoughts. At times the adversary appears openly and behaves brutally and cruelly like an enemy and, at other times, under the guise of a flattering friend, he seduces by shrewdness. That which occurs in battle between two opposing armies also occurs to every man individually in battle with the passions of this world. Truly, "*there can be no rest for those on earth who desire to be saved.*" When salvation comes, rest also comes.

Archimandrite Justin Popović

On God As Judge

Archimandrite Justin Popović, *The Orthodox Church and Ecumenism*, Translated from the Serbian by Benjamin Emmanuel Stanley, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 2000, pp. 85–88

The eternal, evangelical truth of God as Judge is neither imposed knowledge nor is it unnaturally added to divinely-revealed truths. It is a natural, integral part of holy Revelation in the theanthropic Body of the Church. The logic of Revelation would not be divine without it, and the theanthropic dispensation of salvation would not be complete. Without it, Divine Revelation would be like the world without the heaven above. It is a roof that covers and completes the resplendent temple of the theanthropic truths about man and the world. It is of the same nature and essence as the other holy dogmas: they are found within it as it is in them. It has the same value and life-giving powers. It cannot be separated from them, as together they constitute one indivisible theanthropic organism. It is natural for God, who is the Creator, Saviour and Sanctifier, also to be the Judge. As Creator, He brought us from non-being into being, ordaining that, as the goal of our existence, we become Godlike with the help of the soul He gave us in His likeness, and to increase *with the increase of God ... unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ* [Col. 2:19[58]; Eph. 4:13[59]]. As Saviour, He saved us from sin, death and the devil by introducing into human nature, rendered mortal by sin, the Principle and the power of resurrection and immortality. As Sanctifier, He has given us by grace, in His theanthropic Body, the Church, all the means and powers necessary for the adoption of His theanthropic ascesis of salvation and the fulfilment of the Purpose of our existence. As Judge, He appraises, judges and determines our attitude towards Him as Creator and ourselves as His God-like creation, towards Him as Saviour and ourselves as the subject of salvation, towards Him as the Theanthropos, the Church, the Sanctifier, and ourselves as the object of sanctification, deification and likeness to the Theanthropos. In this four-fold act, God *worketh all things after the counsel of His own will* [Eph. 1:11][60], according to the plan for the world and man which He made before time with one purpose: *to gather together all things, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, into their Head*, into Christ [Eph. 1:10; cf. Col. 1:16–17,20[61]).

God placed the yeast of desire for Christ into the dough of the human being, so that man, and with him all creation, should rise to Christ. For this reason all creation is essentially christcentric and is strongly drawn towards Christ as its natural and eternal Centre and Goal (cf. Rom. 8:19-23[62]; Col. 1:16–17; Eph. 1:4–5[63]). Whilst God, in His creative, saving and sanctifying role, appears as a tiller, sower and cultivator, He acts in His role as Judge as a reaper and

prudence; Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him: In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. **Ephesians 1 7–12**

61 For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. **Colossians 1 16–20**

62 For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within

ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.
Romans 8:18–23

63 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.
Ephesians 1:3–6

64 Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed: And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine. His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed: Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury. Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents. For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath. And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.
Matthew 25:24–30

65 Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. For the

winnower. It is natural for the heavenly Sower, who has abundantly sown the seed of eternal, divine truths in the earth of the human soul, to come and see how much of that seed has rotted in the mire of lust, been strangled by the thorns of passion or withered by the coals of sinfulness, and how much has grown and yielded divine fruit, and, also, to reap and winnow the ripe ears of corn. As He is the Tiller, Sower and Cultivator, He is entitled to be also the Reaper and Winnower. Because He gave men all the means necessary to attain the God-given goal of their lives, it is right that He also be the Judge. It would be unpardonably unjust, insulting and tyrannical if God were to act as Judge without having previously appeared as Saviour and Sanctifier. A God who would not reveal the way to eternal life and eternal truth or give men the means of salvation from sin, death and the devil, who would not be their Saviour, would have no right to judge mankind. Mankind would be right to say with one soul and one voice to such a tyrannical God what the wicked servant said in the Parable of the Talents (Matt. 25:24–25[64]).

If Christ were such a God, it would not be right to believe in Him. In that case, He would not truly be God, but one of the powerless so-called gods in the pitiful pantheon of human idols. But because the Theanthropos, the Lord Christ, manifested Himself as the Saviour of man and mankind and, through His inexpressible love for mankind, fulfilled the exceedingly difficult ascetic task of salvation; because He gave men all the heavenly gifts which only the God of love can give, He rightly judges man and the world.

If the Lord Christ is of the same essence with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit, then the judgement of mankind is an act of the whole Holy Trinity. But, so that man, being rebellious and sinful by nature, cannot protest that a God who has not been through human suffering in the earthly nest of vipers has no right to judge men, *the Father … hath committed all judgement unto the Son* [Jn. 5:22[65]], and *He will judge the world in righteousness by* [*that*] *man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead* [Acts 17:31[66]].

By appointing the man Jesus, God the Logos incarnate, to judge the world, God has done mankind the final justice. He, in His love for mankind, brought His heavenly justice on earth full circle, so that men cannot justifiably protest against divine judgement. The Theanthropos, the Lord Christ, is not only the Founder of the Faith, but also the Fulfiller, *the author and the finisher* [Heb. 12:2[67]; cf.2:10[68]] *of* [*our*] *faith*, of the entire divine plan for the world and mankind.

The whole creation hastens through its changes to its end. Through all days and nights, all mankind, and with it all creation hastens towards the Last Day, when the mystery of this world and all human history will reach its fulfilment. All days, like clear streams, and all nights, like black torrents, break through the gorges and abysses of existence carrying all beings and all creation towards the last day into which they must flow and end their course. Everything that has lived and lives in the confines of time must enter that last day and land at its shore. There is no being or created thing which the stream of time will not bring to that last day. Time will end its existence on that day and this is why it is, in the Revelation, called the *Last Day* (Jn. 6:39,40,44[69]; 11:24[70]; 12:48[71]), the *great and notable day* [Acts 2:20[72], Jude 6[73]]; and because it is the divinely-ordained day in which *He will judge the world* [Acts 17 31], it is called the *Day of Judgement* [Matt. 10 15; 1 22.24; 12 36; 2 Pet 2 9; 1 Jn 4 17], *the Day of wrath and the revelation of the righteous judgement of God* [Rom. 2:5[74]]. But, as *all judgement has been committed to the Son* [Jn. 5:22], and He is to be manifested in glory as the Judge on the Last Day, it is also called the *Day of the Son of Man* [Lk. 17 22, 24, 26], the *Day of the Lord* [2 Pet. 3 10; 1 Thess. 5 2; see Ezek. 15 5; Is. 2 12; Joel 2 31; Zeph. 1 14; Mal. 4 1], the *Day of Christ* [2 Thess. 2 2; Phil. 1 10; 2 16], *the Day of the Lord Jesus* [2 Cor. 1 14; 1 Cor. 1 8; 5 5], *the day of judgement and perdition of ungodly men* [2 Pet. 3 7; 2 9].

On this all-important day, the Theanthropos, the Lord Christ, will pronounce His last Judgement, the final judgement on the entire history of the world and men; all men together and each man in particular. And as, after He completed the creation, He surveyed every created being and thing and pronounced His judgement that it was very good [Gen. 1:31[75]], so on the Last Day shall the Triune Lord survey all beings and creation at the end of their journey through history, and pronounce His judgement on everything and everyone. He shall then finally separate good from evil, and set an impassable barrier between them. He shall then pronounce His infallible judgement on all human values. He shall weigh all human acts, thoughts, emotions and words on the unerring scales of His Justice and Love. Then shall the mystery of God of man, of creation, the world, the universe, *be finished* [Rev. 10:7[76]]. All who are righteous and all that is good shall then inherit eternal beatitude, eternal Paradise in the heavenly kingdom of the sweet Lord Jesus, and all that is evil shall inherit eternal suffering, eternal hell in the bitter realm of the wicked and fallen angels.

Archimandrite Justin Popović

Introduction To The Lives Of The Saints

Father Justin Popovich, *Orthodox Faith and Life in Christ*, trans. by Asterios Gerostergios, Institute for Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies, Belmont, MA, 1994, pp. 32–50

Until the coming of the Lord Christ into our terrestrial world, we men really knew only about death and death knew about us. Everything human was penetrated, captured, and conquered by death. Death was closer to us than we ourselves and more real than we ourselves, and more powerful, incomparably more powerful than every man individually and all men together. Earth was a dreadful prison of death, and we people were the helpless slaves of death[77]. Only with the God-man Christ "life was manifested"; "eternal life" appeared to us hopeless mortals, the wretched slaves of death[78]. And that "eternal life" we men have "seen with our eyes and handled with our hands,"[79] and we Christians "make manifest eternal life" to all[80]. For living in union with the Lord Christ, we live eternal life even here on earth[81]. We know from personal experience that Jesus Christ is the true God and eternal life[82]. And for this did He come into the world: to show us the true God and eternal life in Him[83]. Genuine and true love for man consists of this, only of this: that God sent His Only-Begotten Son into the world that we might live through Him[84] and through Him live eternal life. Therefore, he who has the Son of God has life; he who has not the Son of God has not life[85]—he is completely in death. Life in the one true God and Lord Jesus Christ is really our only true life because it is wholly eternal and completely stronger than death. Can a life which is infected by death and which ends in death really be called life? just as honey is not honey when it is mixed with a poison which gradually turns all the honey into poison, so a life which ends in death is not life.

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for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee.
Hebrews 2:9–12

69 For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day. The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven. And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven? Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves. No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.
John 6:38–44

70 Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again. Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day. Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?
John 11:23–26

71 I am come a light into the world, that

feels and realizes himself to be eternal. And this he feels to a greater degree inasmuch as he lives according to that faith which gradually sanctifies his soul, heart, conscience, his entire being, by the grace-filled Divine energies. In proportion to the faith of a man the sanctification of his nature increases. And the holier the man is, the stronger and more vivid is his feeling of personal immortality and the consciousness of his own and everybody else's immortality.

Actually, a man's real life begins with his faith in the Lord Christ, which commits all his soul, all his heart, all his strength to the Lord Christ, Who gradually sanctifies, transfigures, deifies them. And through that sanctification, transfiguration, and deification the grace-filled Divine energies, which give him the all-powerful feeling and consciousness of personal immortality and personal eternity, are poured out upon him. In reality, our life is life inasmuch as it is in Christ. And as much as it is in Christ is shown by its holiness: the holier a life, the more immortal and more eternal it is.

Opposed to this process is death. What is death? Death is ripened sin; and ripened sin is separation from God, in Whom alone is life and the source of life. This truth is evangelical and Divine: holiness is life, sinfulness is death; piety is life, atheism is death; faith is life, unbelief is death; God is life, the devil is death. Death is separation from God, and life is returning to God and living in God. Faith is indeed the revival of the soul from lethargy, the resurrection of the soul from the dead: "he was dead, and is alive" [Luke 15: 24][89]. Man experienced this resurrection of the soul from death for the first time with the God-man Christ and constantly experiences it in His holy Church, since all of Him is found in Her. And He gives Himself to all believers through the holy mysteries and the holy virtues. Where He is, there is no longer death: there one has already passed from death to life. With the Resurrection of Christ we celebrate the deadening of death, the beginning of a new, eternal life[90].

True life on earth indeed begins from the Resurrection of the Savior, for it does not end in death. Without the Resurrection of Christ human life is nothing else but a gradual dying which finally inevitably ends in death. Real true life is that life which does not end in death. And such a life became possible on earth only with the Resurrection of the Lord Christ the God-man. Life is real life only in God, for it is a holy life and by virtue of this an immortal life. Just as in sin is death, so in holiness is immortality. Only with faith in the risen Lord Christ does man experience the most crucial miracle of his existence: the passover from death to immortality, from transitoriness into eternity, from hell to heaven. Only then does man find himself, his true self, his eternal self: "for he was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found" [Luke 15:24].

What are Christians? Christians are Christ-bearers, and by virtue of this bearers and possessors of eternal life, and this according to the measure of faith and according to the measure of holiness which is from faith. The Saints are the most perfect Christians, for they have been sanctified to the highest degree with the podvigs of holy faith in the risen and eternally-living Lord Christ and no death has power over them. Their life is entirely from the Lord Christ, and for this reason it is entirely Christ's life; and their thought is entirely Christ's thought; and their perception is Christ's perception. All that they have is first Christ's and then theirs. If the soul, it is first Christ's and then theirs: if life, it is first Christ's and then theirs. In them is nothing of themselves but rather wholly and in everything the Lord Christ.

Therefore, the Lives of the Saints are nothing else but the life of the Lord Christ, repeated in every saint to a greater or lesser degree in this or that form. More precisely it is the life of the Lord Christ continued through the Saints, the life of the incarnate God the Logos, the God-man Jesus Christ who became man. This was so that as man He could give and transmit to us His divine life; so that as God by His life he could sanctify and make immortal and eternal our human life on earth. "For both he who sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one" [Heb. 2:11][91].

The Lord Christ made this possible and realizable in the world of man from the time that He became man, partook of flesh and blood, and thus became a Brother of man, a Brother according to flesh and blood[92]. Having become man but having remained God, the God-man led a holy, sinless, Divine-human life on earth, and by this life, death, and Resurrection, annihilated the devil and his dominion of death and by this act gave and constantly gives His grace-filled energies to those who believe in Him, so that they may annihilate the devil and every death and every temptation[93]. That Divine-human life is found entirely in the Divine-human Body of Christ—the Church—and is constantly experienced in the Church as an earthly-heavenly whole, and by individuals according to the measure of their faith.

The lives of the saints are in fact the life of the Godman Christ, which is poured out into His followers and is experienced by them in His Church.

For the smallest part of this life is always directly from Him because He is life[94], infinite and boundless and eternal life, which by His Divine power vanquished all deaths and resurrects from all deaths. According to the all-true and good tidings of the All-True One: "I am the resurrection and the life[95]". The miraculous Lord who is completely "resurrection and life" is in His Church in His whole being as Divine-human reality, and consequently there is no end to the duration of this reality. His life is continued through all ages; every Christian is of the same body with Christ[96], and he is a Christian because he lives the Divine-human life of this Body of Christ as Its organic cell.

Who is a Christian? A Christian is a man who lives by Christ and in Christ. The commandment of the Holy Gospel of God is divine: "live worthily of God"[97]. God, Who became incarnate and Who as the Godman has in entirety remained in His Church, which lives eternally by Him. And one lives "worthily of God" when one lives according to the Gospel of Christ. Therefore, this Divine commandment of the Holy Gospel is also natural: "Live worthily of the Gospel of Christ"[98].

Life according to the Gospel, holy life, Divine life, that is the natural and normal life for Christians. For Christians, according to their vocation, are holy: That good tiding and commandment resounds throughout the whole Gospel of the New Testament[99]. To become completely holy, both in soul and in body, that is our vocation[100]. This is not a miracle, but rather the norm, the rule of faith. The commandment of the Holy Gospel is clear and most clear: as the Holy One who has called you is Holy, so be ye holy in all manner of life[101]. And that means that according to Christ the Holy One, Who, having been incarnate and become man, showed forth in Himself a completely holy life, and as such commands men: "be ye holy, for I am Holy" (1 Peter 1:16). He has the right to command this, for having become man He gives men as Himself, the Holy One, all the Divine energies which [are] necessary for a holy and pious life in this world[102]. Having united themselves spiritually and by Grace to the Holy One—the Lord Christ—with the help of faith, Christians themselves receive from Him the holy energies that they may lead a holy life.

Living by Christ, the saints can do the works of Christ, for by Him they become not only powerful but all-powerful: "I can do all things in Christ Jesus who strengthens me"[103]. And in them is clearly realized the truth of the All-True One, that those who believe in Him will do His works and will do greater things than these: "Verily, verily I say unto you: he that believeth in me, the works that I do he shall do also and greater works than these shall he do"[104]. And truly: the shadow of the Apostle Peter healed; by a word St. Mark the Ascetic moved and stopped a mountain… When God became man, then Divine life became human life, Divine power became human power, Divine truth became human truth, and Divine righteousness became human righteousness: everything which is God's became man's.

What are the "Acts of the Holy Apostles"? They are the acts of Christ which the Holy Apostles do by the power of Christ, or better still: they do them by Christ Who is in them and acts through them. And what are the lives of the Holy Apostles? They are the living of Christ's life which in the Church is transmitted to all faithful followers of Christ and is continued through them with the help of the holy mysteries and the holy virtues.

And what are the "Lives of the Saints"? They are nothing else but a certain kind of continuation of the "Acts of the Apostles." In them is found the same Gospel, the same life, the same truth, the same righteousness, the same love, the same faith, the same eternity, the same "power from on high," the same God and Lord. For "the Lord Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and for ever"[105]: the same for all people of all times, distributing the same gifts and the same Divine energies to all who believe in Him. This continuation of all life-creating Divine energies in the Church of Christ from ages to ages and from generation to generation indeed constitutes living Holy Tradition. This Holy Tradition is continued without interruption as the life of Grace in all Christians, in whom through the holy mysteries and the holy virtues, Jesus Christ lives by His Grace. He is wholly present in His Church, for She is His fullness: "the fullness of Him who filleth all in all"[106]. And the God-man Christ is the all-perfect fullness of the Godhead: "for in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily"[107]. And Christians must, with the help of the holy mysteries and the holy virtues, fill themselves with "all the fullness of God"[108].

The Lives of the Saints show forth those persons filled with Christ God, those Christ-bearing persons, those holy persons in whom is preserved and through whom is transmitted the holy tradition of that holy grace-filled life. It is preserved and transmitted by means of holy evangelical living. For

whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness. And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak.
John 12:46–50

72 The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come: And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.
Acts 2 20–21

73 I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not. And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness

unto the judgment of the great day. Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.
Jude 5–7

74 And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God? Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; Who will render to every man according to his deeds: To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life: But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile: For there is no respect of persons with God.
Romans 2:3–11

75 And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the

the lives of the saints are holy evangelical truths which are translated into our human life by grace and podvigs (asceticism). There is no evangelical truth which cannot be transformed into human life. They were all brought by Christ God for one purpose: to become our life, our reality, our possession, our joy. And the saints, all, without exception, live these Divine truths as the center of their lives and the essence of their being. For this reason the "Lives" of the Saints are a proof and a testimony: that our origin is in heaven; that we are not from this world but from that one; that a man is a true man only in God; that on earth one lives by heaven; that "our conversation is in heaven"[109]; that our task is to make ourselves heavenly, feeding ourselves with the "heavenly bread" which came down to earth[110]. And He came down to feed us with eternal Divine truth, eternal Divine good, eternal Divine righteousness, eternal Divine love, eternal Divine life through Holy Communion, through living in the one true God and Lord Jesus Christ[111].

In other words, our vocation is to fill ourselves with the Lord Christ, with His Divine life-creating energies, to live in Christ and to make ourselves christs. If you set about this you are already in heaven although you walk on earth; you are already wholly in God even though your being has remained within the limits of human nature. The man who makes himself a christ surpasses himself, as man, by God, by the God-man, in Whom is given the perfect image of the true, real whole man in the image of God; and in Him are also given the all-vanquishing Divine energies, by the help of which man raises himself above every sin, above every death, above every hell; and this he does by the Church and in the Church, which all the powers of hell cannot overcome, because in Her is the whole wondrous God-man the Lord Christ, with all His Divine energies, His truths, His realities, His perfections, His lives, His eternities.

The Lives of the Saints are holy testimonies of the miraculous power of our Lord Jesus Christ. In reality they are the testimonies of the Acts of the Apostles, only continued throughout the ages. The saints are nothing other than holy witnesses, like the Holy Apostles who were the first witnesses—of what?, of the God-man Jesus Christ: of Him crucified, resurrected, ascended into heaven and eternally alive; about His all-saving Gospel which is unceasingly written with evangelical holy deeds from generation to generation, for the Lord Christ, who is always the same, constantly works miracles by His Divine power through His holy witnesses. The Holy Apostles are the first holy witnesses of the Lord Christ and His Divine-human economy of the salvation of the world, and their lives are living and immortal testimonies of the Gospel of the Savior as the new life, the life of grace, holy, Divine, Divine-human and therefore always miraculous, miraculous and true as the Savior's life itself is miraculous and true.

And who are the Christians? Christians are those through whom the holy Divine-human life of Christ is continued from generation to generation until the end of the world and of time, and they all make up one body, the Body of Christ-the Church: they are sharers of the Body of Christ and members of one another[112]. The stream of immortal divine life began to flow and still flows unceasingly from the Lord Christ, and through him Christians flow into eternal life. Christians are the Gospel of Christ continued throughout all the ages of the race of men. In the Lives of the Saints, everything is ordinary as in the Holy Gospel, but everything is extraordinary as in the Holy Gospel—both one and the other, uniquely true and real. And everything is true and real by the same Divine-human reality; and the same holy power—Divine and human—bears witness to it: Divine in an all-perfect way, and human—also in an all-perfect way.

What are the Lives of the Saints? Behold, we are in heaven, for earth becomes heaven through the Saints of God. Behold, we are among angels in the flesh, among Christ-bearers. And whoever they are, the Lord is completely in them, and with them, and among them; and there is the whole Eternal Divine Truth, and the whole Eternal Divine Righteousness, and the whole Eternal Divine Love, and the whole Eternal Divine Life.

What are the Lives of the Saints? Behold, we are in Paradise, in which everything which is Divine, holy, immortal, eternal, righteous, true, and evangelical grows and increases. For by the Cross in every one of the saints the tree of eternal, Divine, immortal life blossomed and brought forth much fruit. And the Cross leads to heaven; it leads even us after the thief, who for our encouragement entered Paradise first after the All-Holy Divine Cross-bearer—the Lord Christ—and entered with a cross of repentance.

What are the Lives of the Saints? Behold, we are in eternity: no longer is there time, for in the Saints of God Eternal Divine Truth, Eternal Divine Righteousness, Eternal Divine Love, Eternal Divine Life reign and rule. And in them there is no longer any death, for their entire being is filled with the resurrecting Divine energies of the Risen Lord Christ, the Only Vanquisher of death, of all deaths in all worlds. There is no death in them—in holy people: their whole being is filled with the

Only Immortal One—the All-Immortal One: the Lord and God Jesus Christ. Among them—we are on earth among the only true immortals: they have conquered all deaths, all sins, all passions, all demons, all hells. When we are with them, no death can harm us, for they are the lightning-rods of death. There is no thunderbolt with which death can strike us when we are with them, among them, in them.

Saints are people who live on earth by holy, eternal Divine truths. That is why the Lives of the Saints are actually applied dogmatics, for in them all the holy eternal dogmatic truths are experienced in all their life-creating and creative energies. In The Lives of the Saints it is most evidently shown that dogmas are not only ontological truths in themselves and for themselves, but that each one of them is a wellspring of eternal life and a source of holy spirituality.

According to the All-True Gospel of the unique and irreplaceable Savior and Lord: "My words are spirit and life"[113], for each one pours out from itself saving, sanctifying, a life-creating, transfiguring power. Without the holy truth of the Holy Trinity we have none of that power from the Holy Trinity on which we draw by faith and which vivifies sanctifies, deifies, and saves us. Without the holy truth about the God-man, there is no salvation for man, for from it, when it is lived by man, wells forth the saving power which saves from sin, death, the devil.

And this holy truth about the God-man—do not the lives of countless saints most evidently and experimentally bear witness to it? For the saints are saints by the very fact that they constantly live the entire Lord Jesus as the soul of their soul, as the conscience of their conscience, as the mind of their mind, as the being of their being, as the life of their life. And each one of them together with the Holy Apostle loudly proclaims the truth: "Yet not I live, but Christ liveth in me"[114]. Delve into the Lives of the Saints: from all of them wells forth the grace-filled, life-creating, and saving power of the Most Holy Theotokos, Who leads them from podvig to podvig, from virtue to virtue, from victory over sin to victory over death, from victory over death to victory over the devil, and leads them up into spiritual joy, beyond which there is no sadness nor sighing nor sorrow[115], but rather everything is only "joy and peace in the Holy Spirit" [116], joy and peace from the victory obtained over all sins, over all passions, over all deaths, over all evil spirits.

And all this, without a doubt, is the practical and living testimony to the holy dogma concerning the Most Holy Theotokos, truly "more honorable than the Cherubim and beyond compare more glorious than the Seraphim," the holy dogma which the saints by faith carry in their hearts and by which they live with zealous love. Again if you want one, two, or thousands of irrefutable testimonies of the life-bearing and life-creating nature of the All-Venerable Cross of the Lord, and with it an experimental confirmation of the all-truthfulness of the holy dogma of the saving nature of the death of the Savior on the Cross, then start out with faith through the Lives of the Saints. And you will have to feel and see that to each saint individually, and to all the saints together, the power of the Cross is the all-vanquishing weapon with which they conquer all visible and invisible enemies of their salvation. Furthermore, you will behold the Cross in all their being: in their soul, in their heart, in their conscience, in their mind, in their will, and in their body, and in each one of them you will find an inexhaustible wellspring of the saving, all-sanctifying power which unfailingly leads them from perfection to perfection, and from joy to joy, until finally it leads them into the eternal Heavenly Kingdom where there is the unceasing triumph of those who keep festival and the infinite delight of those who behold the ineffable beauty of the face of the Lord[117].

But not only these aforementioned dogmas are witnessed by the Lives of the Saints, but all the other holy dogmas: of the Church, of grace, of the holy mysteries, of the holy virtues, of man, of sin, of the holy relics, of the holy icons, of life beyond the grave, and of everything else which makes up the Divine-human economy of salvation. Yes, the Lives of the Saints are experimental dogmatics. Yes, the Lives of the Saints are experienced dogmatics, experienced by the holy life of the holy people of God.

In addition, the Lives of the Saints contain in themselves Orthodox ethics in their entirety, Orthodox morality, in the full radiance of its Divine-human sublimity and its immortal life-creating nature. In them is shown and proven in a most convincing manner that the holy mysteries are the source of the holy virtues; that the holy virtues are the fruit of the holy mysteries—they are born of Them, they develop by Their help, they are nourished by Them, they live by Them, they are perfected by Them, they become immortal by Them, they live eternally by Them. All the Divine moral laws have their source in the holy mysteries and are realized in the holy virtues. For this reason the Lives of the Saints are indeed experiential ethics, applied

earth. And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat. And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so. And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.
Genesis 1:26–31

76 And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven, And sware by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer: But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets.
Revelation 10 5–7

77 And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me. Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.
Hebrews 2:13–18

ethics. Actually, the Lives of the Saints prove irrefutably that Ethics is nothing other than Applied Dogmatics. The entire Life of the Saints consists of the holy mysteries and the holy virtues, and the holy mysteries and the holy virtues are gifts of the Holy Spirit Who accomplishes all in all[118].

And what else are the Lives of the Saints but the only Orthodox pedagogical science. For in them in a countless number of evangelical ways, which are completely worked out by the experience of many centuries, it is shown how the perfect human personality, the completely ideal man, is built up and fashioned, and how with the help of the holy mysteries and the holy virtues in the Church of Christ he grows into "a perfect man, according to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."[119] And this is indeed the educational ideal of the Gospel, the only educational ideal worthy of a being made in the image of God, as man is, and which is established by the Gospel of the Lord Christ, established and realized first by the God-man Christ, and afterwards realized in the Holy Apostles and the other Saints of God. At the same time, without the God-man Christ, and outside the God-man Christ, with any other educational ideal, man forever remains an incomplete being, a wretched being, a miserable being, who deserves all the tears of all eyes in God's worlds.

If you wish, the Lives of the Saints are a sort of Orthodox Encyclopedia. In them can be found everything which is necessary for the soul which hungers and thirsts for eternal righteousness and eternal truth in this life, and which hungers and thirsts for Divine immortality and eternal life. If faith is what you need, there you will find it in abundance: and you will feed your soul with food which will never make it hungry. If you need love, truth, righteousness, hope, meekness, humility, repentance, prayer, or whatever virtue or podvig, in them, the Lives of the Saints, you will find a countless number of holy teachers for every podvig and will obtain grace-filled help for every virtue.

If you are suffering for your faith in Christ, the Lives of the Saints will console you and encourage you and make you bold and give you wings, and your torments will be changed into joy. If you are in any sort of temptation, the Lives of the Saints will help you overcome it both now and forever. If you are in danger from the invisible enemies of salvation, the Lives of the Saints will arm you with the "whole armor of God,"[120] and you will crush them all now and forever and throughout your whole life. If you are in the midst of visible enemies and persecutors of the Church of Christ, the Lives of the Saints will give you the courage and strength of a confessor, and you will fearlessly confess the one true God and Lord in all worlds—Jesus Christ—and you will boldly stand up for the holy truth of His Gospel unto death, unto every death, and you will feel stronger than all deaths, and much more so than all visible enemies of Christ, and being tortured for Christ you will shout for joy, feeling with all your being that your life is in heaven, hidden with Christ in God, wholly above all deaths[121].

In the Lives of the Saints are shown numerous but always certain ways of salvation, enlightenment, sanctification, transfiguration, "christification," deification; all the ways are shown by which man conquers sin, every sin; conquers passion, every passion; conquers death, every death; conquers the devil, every devil. There is a remedy there for every sin: from every passion—healing, from every death-resurrection, from every devil—deliverance; from all evils—salvation. There is no passion, no sin for which the Lives of the Saints do not show how the passion or sin in question is conquered, mortified, and uprooted.

In them it is clearly and obviously demonstrated: There is no spiritual death from which one cannot be resurrected by the Divine power of the risen and ascended Lord Christ; there is no torment, there is no misfortune, there is no misery, there is no suffering which the Lord will not change either gradually or all at once into quiet, compunctionate joy because of faith in Him. And again there are countless soul-stirring examples of how a sinner becomes a righteous man in the Lives of the Saints: how a thief, a fornicator, a drunkard, a sensualist, a murderer, an adulterer becomes a holy man-there are many, many examples of this in the Lives of the Saints; how a selfish, egoistical, unbelieving, atheistic, proud, avaricious, lustful, evil, wicked, depraved, angry, spiteful, quarrelsome, malicious, envious, malevolent, boastful, vainglorious, unmerciful, gluttonous man becomes a man of God-there many, many examples of this in the Lives of the Saints.

By the same token in the Lives of the Saints there are very many marvelous examples of how a youth becomes a holy youth, a maiden becomes a holy maiden, an old man becomes a holy old man, how an old woman becomes a holy old woman, how a child becomes a holy child, how parents become holy parents, how a son becomes a holy son, how a daughter becomes a holy daughter, how a family becomes a holy family, how a community becomes a holy community, how a priest becomes a holy priest, how a bishop becomes a holy bishop, how a shepherd becomes a holy shepherd, how a peasant becomes a holy peasant, how an emperor

78 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.
1 John 1:1-4

79 *cf.* 1 John 1:1

80 *cf.* 1 John 1 :2

81 *cf.* 1 John 1 :3

82 All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death. We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not. And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness. And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life. Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.
1 John 5:17-21

83 If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.
1 John 5:9-12

84 Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born

becomes a holy emperor, how a cowherd becomes a holy cowherd, how a worker becomes a holy worker, how a judge becomes a holy judge, how a teacher becomes a holy teacher, how an instructor becomes a holy instructor, how a soldier becomes a holy soldier, how an officer becomes a holy officer, how a ruler becomes a holy ruler, how a scribe becomes a holy scribe, how a merchant becomes a holy merchant, how a monk becomes a holy monk, how an architect becomes a holy architect, how a doctor becomes a holy doctor, how a tax collector becomes a holy tax collector, how a pupil becomes a holy pupil, how an artisan becomes a holy artisan, how a philosopher becomes a holy philosopher, how a scientist becomes a holy scientist, how a statesman becomes a holy statesman, how a minister becomes a holy minister, how a poor man becomes a holy poor man, how a rich man becomes a holy rich man, how a slave becomes a holy slave, how a master becomes a holy master, how a married couple becomes a holy married couple, how an author becomes a holy author, how an artist becomes a holy artist...

April 8

There is heroism above heroism and asceticism above asceticism. **St. Epiphanius of Cyprus** invited *Hilarion the Great* to dinner and, in order to show the greatest hospitality to his distinguished guest, set roasted chicken on the table and offered it to him. **Hilarion** said to him: *"Forgive me, but ever since I was tonsured a monk, I have eaten nothing butchered."* To this **Epiphanius** replied: *"And I, ever since I was tonsured a monk, have never lay down in bed until I first forgave my enemy."* Amazed, **Hilarion** said: *"Your virtue is greater than mine, O holy master!"* This is a great lesson for all of us. Fasting is an admirable thing, but it is more admirable to forgive insults. Through fasting a man is preparing for charity, but by forgiving insults a man shows charity. Fasting precedes forgiveness, but fasting alone does not save without forgiveness.

of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. 1 John 4:7-11

85 1 John 5:12

86 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God. After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judaea; and there he tarried with them, and baptized. And John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized. For John was not yet cast into prison. Then there arose a question between some of John's disciples and the Jews about purifying. And they came unto John, and said unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all men come to him. John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven. Ye yourselves bear me witness,

that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him. He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease. He that cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven is above all. And what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth; and no man receiveth his testimony. He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true. For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him. The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.
John 3:16-36

87 Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves. No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me. Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.
John 6:43-47

88 For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life,

Augoustinos N. Kantiotes, Bishop of Florina

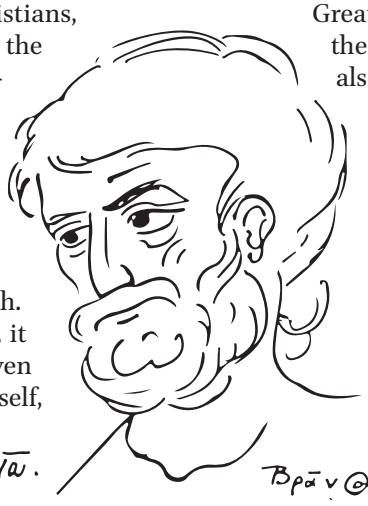
How Should We Celebrate Christmas?

The Holy Twenty Thousand Martyrs—December 28

Augoustinos N. Kantiotes, Bishop of Florina, Greece, *Fragrant Flowers—Orthodox Homilies on the Lives of the Saints*, Translation and Foreword by Asterios Gerostergios, Institute for Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies, Belmon MA, 2006, pp. 205–208

Glory be to God! Every year on the twenty-fifth of December, my beloved, we celebrate Christmas and after Christmas the holy days continue until we end with the Feast of Saint John the Baptist. This is the so called *dodecahemeron*.

The question is raised, "How should we celebrate Christmas? How should we celebrate the twelve days of the holy season? Do we celebrate, as Christ wants?" Unfortunately, in the time in which we live—a time of disbelief and corruption—only the names of the great Holy Days remain; the essence of the feasts is far from us. If you go, for example, on the day of Christmas to the homes of the Orthodox Christians, you will not hear a word about the most important event in the history of the world—that God became man for the salvation of man. In not a single home does a father and mother open the Gospel to read a section from the Evangelists, which describe the divine birth. If the name of Christ is heard, it will be as a blasphemy. Yes, even on the holy day of Christmas, itself, there are people who open their filthy mouths and blaspheme Christ and the All Holy Mother. Who can count the sins which take place in the *dodecahemeron* by young and old; the drunkenness, the card games, the prostitution of the fornicators, and other sins? During these days, Satan has many customers. It is not an exaggeration to say that the Christians, save for a few exceptions, celebrate Christmas without Christ.



Do you want to see how the Christians of the first centuries celebrated? In this homily we will speak about how the Christians of Nicomedia used to celebrate Christmas. Nicomedia was an ancient city of Asia Minor not far from Constantinople. In this city, Christianity had made deep inroads. Great progress had been made preaching the Gospel. Not only illiterate people, but also educated men with high positions and offices in the Roman State, had believed in Christ. Among them was a chosen girl named Donna. She was at first a priestess, namely a woman who serve like a priest in the temples of the idols. When she read the Epistles of the Apostle Paul, however, she was amazed with everything that the Apostle wrote. She could discern where light, truth, and life were. Donna changed her mind, left the idols, was baptized, and became a Christian.

Another person, who had a confidential position in the palace, also became a Christian; his name was Indis.

When the idolaters found out that these two people became Christians, they were enraged. They went to the homes where they were living and took whatever they had. Donna and Indis succeeded in keeping two things, which were more valuable than all the treasures of the world, from the hands of the idolaters—the Gospel and the artophorion. The artophorion is a small box where the Christians of the first centuries kept the divine pearl from which they would partake often. Donna took the Gospel and Indis took the artophorion. Today, these two items are found in the Holy Sanctuary. The Gospel and Holy Communion are indispensable. Without these two items there can be no Christian life.

Donna and Indis were thrown into prison. Not a long time passed when these two persons found the martyr's death. Persecution, however, was not reserved to only to these two persons. The orders of Emperor Maximian were strict. The military administrator of Nicomedia, a savage wolf, thirsted to drink the blood of Christians. He looked for a suitable opportunity in which he could exterminate, not only two people, but as many as possible and, if it was possible, all the Christians of Nicomedia. Since he was cunning, however, he hid his plans. He wanted to strike quickly and decisively.

The opportunity came; a certain spy informed him that the Christians of Nicomedia would be gathered in a place to celebrate the great Feast of Christmas. At that time they would celebrate Christmas at night. Everyone was congregated in the Church along with their Bishop and the rest of the clergy. While the Divine Liturgy was being conducted, the military governor besieged their gathering with soldiers. He ordered that wood be collected along with other flammable materials and placed around the Church. He had decided to put it to fire and burn all of them. Before he set the fire, however, he informed them that only those who would deny Christ and venerate the idols, would be saved. The military officer expected that they would be scared into denying Christ, however, the time passed and no one appeared to deny Christ. What an admirable thing! Twenty thousand people were congregated there and were celebrating Christmas and not one became a traitor! All had decided to die for Christ. Many, in particular, who were not baptized yet and were being catechized asked if they could be baptized that night. The Archdeacon Agapios preached to the people with burning words and asked them to remain faithful to the end. They kneeling in prayer. Chanting was heard when the end came. The idolaters set the fire. Enormous flames rose and encircled them from all sides. What a terrible furnace! Everyone—the elderly with white hair, small children, infants, men and women, clergy and laity—all were burned as incense in Christ's censer of love. Twenty thousand martyrs! It is one of the greatest single sacrifices which the history of our Church mentions.

Did you see, my beloved Christians, how the Christians of Nicomedia celebrated the Feast of Christmas? Let us pay attention. Let us place in front of us this picture of sacrifice and ask ourselves, "If we were that night in Nicomedia, what stand would we take?" Would we stay until the end in the Divine Liturgy or would we leave when we heard the order of the unbelieving army officer in order to save our skins? It is not necessary to answer; the facts speak for themselves. Today the doors of the Church are open and free—no one threatens us—and in spite of this, how many go to church? The Church is chanting: "Glory to God in the highest", "Today Christ is born", and other hymns. Contemporary Christians in Athens, Thessaloniki, and many other cities do not go to Church but, rather, gather at night in hotels and taverns to celebrate Christmas with banquets. Then there are the others who leave before the end of the Divine Liturgy.

Christians do these things on this holy day. What if a persecution occurred today? How many people would go to Church and receive the precious gifts? No matter how many there are, even if there are only five who remain in a city—then only these will be the true Christians. These will be worthy to escort the 14,000 infants in the heavens which Herod killed and the 20,000 Martyrs of Nicomedia, whom another Herod, Maximian, burned.

My Christians! Herods will always exist. However, Christians who are willing to sacrifice their lives will never disappear. The "Glory to God in the Highest" will never cease to be heard on earth from the mouths of martyrs. No power of the Antichrist will ever be able to extinguish the name of Christ. To Him belongs honor, glory, and worship forever.

and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.
John 5:22-25

89 And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.
Luke 15:21-24

90 *cf. Paschal Canon*, Ode 7 (Translator's note)

91 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee.
Hebrews 2:9-12

92 And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me. Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he

took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.
Hebrews 2:13-18

93 *cf.* Heb. 2 :14, 15, 18

94 Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way? Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him
John 14:5-7

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.
John 1:1-5

95 Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again. Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day. Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this? She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.
John 11:23-27

96 Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again. Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day. Jesus said unto her, I am the

Hieromartyr Saint Philoumenos Of Cyprus - The First Martyr Of "Recent Times"

The short biographical work of the life of Saint Philoumenos which follows has been written by the Holy Monastery of Saint Nikolaos, Orounta, Cyprus. The monastery will also be publishing it in written form shortly. All information about the life of Saint Philoumenos was taken from the book: Saint Hieromartyr Philoumenos of Cyprus, *Holy Monastery of Saint Nicolaos, Orounda, 2013, which is presently in the process of being translated into both the English and Russian languages.*

Childhood Years—Departure For The Monastery

Saint Philoumenos was born on October 15th, 1913 in the parish of Saint Savvas in Nicosia. His parentage originated from the village of Orounda, a village of the Nicosia district in Cyprus. The Saint's parents were Georgios and Magdalene Chassapis.

They had thirteen children and raised them all, "*...in the nurture and admonition of the Lord*"[122], taking care to give them, together with the material necessities, the true Christian Orthodox ethos which was characteristic of their own life. They were people of God and their example was the best education they could give their children. They strictly adhered to all the fasts, praying frequently before the *iconostasis*[123] in their home, and on Sundays attending the Divine Liturgy without failure. Georgios was especially persistent on church attendance. All, both young and old, had to go to church on Sunday whatever the case. But the main source of genuine religious ethos, which characterized the children of the family – especially the twins Sophocles and Alexandros (future hieromonks Philoumenos and Elpidios) was Magdalene's mother Alexandra.

The holy life of this blessed grandmother established the foundations and preconditions for her grandchildren's life in Christ. Alexandra knew how to pray, to fast, to attend the church services and do prostrations. Little by little all the children learned through experience how to do the same. They even learnt the prayers that their grandmother would say as she carried out her prostrations, and they would also say: "Lord Jesus Christ, help me. Most Holy Mother of God (Theotokos), help me".

Every night they read the Holy Bible and the *Synaxaria*[124] of the Saints. Their grandmother would also light the oil lamp before the iconostasis, burn incense, then all would venerate the icons, and pray briefly before retiring to their beds. The twins, however, stood out from all the rest. Together they especially loved Orthodox services, and indeed their eldest brother, with whom they shared the same room, noticed how during the night the two children would wait until he fell asleep and as soon as they were sure about this, they would rise and begin to pray, which would sometimes last as long as two hours.

They particularly enjoyed reading the life of *Saint John Kalyvites*[125]. They were fascinated by his life and had a strong desire to imitate him by freeing themselves from the world to become monks. So, at the age of fourteen they made the final decision to flee for the Monastery of *Stavrovouni*[126] without saying anything to their parents. They arrived there by wagon and the Abbot of the monastery, Elder Barnabas (Charalampides) accepted them as novice monks, discerning their pure desire for monasticism. Indeed, the twins easily managed to assimilate and become accustomed to this ancient type of monasticism. During the fifth year of their stay at the monastery the exarch of the Most Holy Sepulchre, Father Palladios, passed by the monastery and suggested to the young boys to return with him to Jerusalem in order to attend the Gymnasium of the Patriarchate and later stay there as members of the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre. Both the Abbot Barnabas and their parents gave their blessing, thus they departed from their monastery for the Holy Land with the deep conviction that they had been called by the Lord.

Ministry In The Holy Land

The two brothers moved to Jerusalem in 1934 under the protection and care of the future Patriarch Timotheos Themelis (1935–1955). They attended the Gymnasium of the Patriachate and their attendance was characterized by a great zeal without neglecting the strict *typixon*[127], which they inherited from Stavrovouni: the daily services, the prostrations and their *monastic prayer rule*[128].

Many times they remained in their rooms and locked the doors, in order to pray undisturbed. On occasion when their schoolmates visited, in order not to be distracted from prayer, they would pretend that they were about to begin the service and thus their visitors would leave immediately. Indeed, when they had school examinations, not only did they not relinquish their daily prayer "rule", but on top of it they added a Supplication Canon[129] to The Theodokos. They would go to the *Metochion*[130] of Gesthemane and there they would chant the Supplication Canon to The Most Holy mother of God, pleading to her to help them in the lesson in which they were to be examined.

At school the other children especially loved them. "We had many schoolmates", the memorable David Tleel would state, "but with Philoumenos and Elpidios we felt different. We ate together, studied together ... We were like family. Philoumenos especially had something in his behaviour that made you love him, and everyone loved him... Really, everybody loved him. He was simple and without guile. Whatever occurred, he would accept it and was never angered. He forgave... We might laugh, play pranks on him and he would never become annoyed. He was good and pure in his soul, but above all humble. We realised early on that Philoumenos lived a holy life. That is why we loved and respected him at the same time."

During the third year of their enrollment at the Gymnasium, in 1937, Sophocles and Alexandros were tonsured monks by Patriarch Timotheos and according to Orthodox monastic tradition were renamed Philoumenos and Elpidios respectively, thus officially joining the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre. During that same year they were ordained deacons. In 1940 Father Elpidios was ordained a presbyter and he zealously served different appointments and responsibilities assigned to him. In 1949 he departed from the Holy Land to serve the Patriarch of Alexandria and also following a path of spiritual service in many locations such as United Kingdom, Ukraine, and Greece to name a few.

His brother Saint Philoumenos was ordained as presbyter in 1943 and remained in the Holy Land serving humbly and mostly out of sight for forty five continuous years until his martyrdom in 1979. He served the Patriarchate of Jerusalem in many positions: as an assistant caretaker at the central kitchen (until 1946), as an Abbot in Tiberias (1946–1953), as an archimandrite in Joppa (1953–1959), as the principal of the Patriarchal School (1959–1961), as typikaris[131] at the church of Saints Constantine and Helen (1962–1965), as Abbot of the Holy Monastery of Transfiguration in Ramallah, as Abbot of the Monastery of Saint Theodosios (1967–1970) and for six years at the Monastery of Prophet Elias (1970–1976). After his ministry in Ramallah Saint Philoumenos was transferred to Jacob's Well (May 8, 1979), where he served until his martyrdom (November 29 of that year).

resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this? She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.
Ephesians 3:1-7

97 For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness; Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.
Colossians 1:9-17

98 Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel; And in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident

token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God.
Philippians 1:27-28

99 *cf.* 1 Thes. 4:3,7; Rm. 1:7; 1 Cor. 1:2; Eph. 1:1-18,2:19,5:3, 6:18; Phillip. 1:1, 4:21-22; Col. 1: 2-4,12, 22, 26; 1 Thes. 3:13, 5:27, 2 Tim. 1:9; Phlm. 5:7, Heb. 3:1, 6:10, 13:24; Jude 3.

100 Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil. And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.
1 Thessalonians 5:21-24

101 Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.
1 Peter 1:13-16

102 Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ: Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.
2 Peter 1:1-4

103 Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know

Humble Keeper Of The Commandments Of The Lord

In his everyday service to the multitude of worshippers at the pilgrimages of the Holy Sepulchre, Saint Philoumenos never ceased to live the life of a monk that struggled with perseverance and patience in order to keep the commandments of the Lord. The commandments of God were his continuous in-depth study, not only expressed in his knowledge of the Divine word, but also in painstaking ascetic life.

His presence was something that stood out among the brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre. He struggled daily to live in Christ and at the same time gave himself wholeheartedly to serving those on pilgrimage to the Holy Land, submitting with selflessness to the instructions of the Patriarch. The preservation and service of the pilgrims was, moreover, for him the fulfilment of a holy duty. His very close friend John Tleel stated: "Wherever he was sent, he willingly went, mainly to the abbacies in the outskirts, and he represented the monastery very well. Everyone who saw him, perceived him as a monk ... a true monk."

At the monasteries where Saint Philoumenos used to serve, he would always try to follow the monastic order of Stavrovouni, which he was taught there as a novice monk. For example, he was very strict as far as fasting was concerned. "Saint Philoumenos", Marilen Odeh remembers, "fasted very strictly, and we who witnessed this, and realised how he lived, benefitted greatly from his example. All the feast days he observed with vespers, Divine Liturgies and fasting. I, a child of thirteen as I was then, had the impression that he fasted continuously. Indeed, most of the time, from what we could understand, he fasted without oil, only taking a little bread and water". "Usually", adds the memorable nun Eupraxia, "He ate very little and had no demands as far as the kind of food was concerned. I remember him saying very often: '*Be happy when you fast. Fasting is beneficial at every time*[132] ' ".

Even though he was very strict with himself, with others he was lenient and accepting, but only to such extent that his leniency would be spiritually beneficial and not harmful. He insisted that children should also fast from a young age, but at the same time he wanted to instil the true meaning of fasting and to teach them to fast correctly. In other words, he didn't emphasize the legalities in the rubrics, but rather the spirituality, without abolishing the spirit of the fast and the fast itself.

The Saint's commitment to the monastic virtues that he had been taught as a child was to be observed in all facets of his life. He was patient, meek, forgiving and unresentful. Anyone who met him cannot remember him judging or blaming anyone, and never discussing things intensely. He was always with a smile, effortlessly forgiving, and never angered. Even if the world was in disorder around him, he was peaceful. More so, when he had difficulties and problems himself. He would face them with such blessedness, as if nothing was happening. "Truly, many times", Father Narkissos attested, "when there was a chance that there would be misunderstanding within the brotherhood, he would always be the first to come and ask forgiveness, even if he was not to blame. This was a great lesson for us who were younger".

Saint Philoumenos was not ambitious. "At his age", John Tleel states, "he could have continued with his studies, he could even have become a Bishop, but he did not seek this. He remained as he was. He didn't want to climb higher". He lived so humbly and meagrely, that when someone saw him he could easily have been mistaken for a beggar. "Even in the Divine Liturgy and the consecration of the Divine Mysteries", Father Ioustinos adds, "he was very humble, abiding in precision to the required ecclesiastical rule. He never wore aesthetically pleasing priestly vestments or expensive cassocks. Only when we had great feasts was he dressed formerly. When he celebrated together with other priests, it was always in simplicity".

His conscious meagreness though, did not stop him from secretly exercising the virtue of almsgiving, just as he had been taught it by his blessed father. Though the people around him had a strong sense that he had no money, even so he always seemed to find ways and helped many monetarily. Indeed he knew who needed help and attended to their needs, before being asked.

Saint Philoumenos greatly loved to study ecclesiastical articles, this is the reason why whoever

knew him remembers him holding a book in his hand and reading continuously. The majority of the fathers would leave in the evening after Vespers and would stroll around the premises of the monastery. Saint Philoumenos however only knew his monastic cell and his reading. He studied ecclesiastical books, especially the Holy Bible and the Psalter, with the purpose of not only increasing his understanding, but also of entering into the deeper knowledge of God.

The serious and strict ethos which characterised the Saint, had an effect on people close to him causing them to behave differently. Before him they would talk reservedly, never jesting, or discussing "worldly" matters. They felt that they were next to a man of God. For this reason they both loved and respected him. Close to him they found spiritual support. He would comfort, educate, but at the same time was careful when correcting people, not to crush their souls.

Moreover, the only spiritual concern the Saint had was the church, the services and his congregation. He never concerned himself with the things "of this world". When he was met on the road, he always seemed to be in a rush. "What are you doing *Geronda*[133] " they would say. "I am in a rush, in a rush", he would always say and leave. He would walk so quickly that you thought he was running. If he was to stop for a moment, he would never start a conversation. He would only say that which was essential, mainly he would listen. He had opinions, but never ambition. There "had to be God" in the conversation in order for him to talk. When, however, topics of faith or spiritual issues arose, he was knowledgeable. Then he would become very dynamic and strict, he would discuss and correct with zeal those who had diverted from the spiritual path, whoever they may be.

The same happened in regard to the safeguarding of the pilgrims. Father Ioustinos remembers, for example, a very characteristic event: "In 1948, as I heard from the Patriachate and locals, that Jews from Tiberias went to the monastery of The Holy Apostles with a bulldozer with the sole purpose of tearing it down. They had already managed to pull down a small part (the room that one finds to the right one ntering the area). When they tried however to progress further down, they saw to their surprise the Saint, who at the time was the Abbot there, throwing himself in front of the bulldozer, preventing them from progressing further! Thus, they were forced to leave without accomplishing anything".

The spiritual exactness which characterised the Saint's life can be shown by the way that he was never absent from a service or neglected his daily monastic rule. Wherever he was, however many responsibilities he had, he always made sure to carry out his spiritual duties and to perform the daily services. Needless to say, he always had the books next to him, they were his companions: the *Horologion*[134], the Psalter, the *Minaion*[135], and the *Paraklitiki*[136]. Even if he had visitors, when it was time for the service, he would cease whatever he was doing and would "run" to the church. "Now it is time for Vespers", he would say, and would start to read the "*ninth hour*[137]". Yet other times, when he accompanied pilgrims outside Jerusalem, while they completed their pilgrimage, he would hide in a corner in order to read whatever part of the service was left undone during the specific day: part of the Psalter or another part of the service "rule" for example.

Saint Philoumenos made sure to hide his spiritual struggles, yet being a vessel of Holy Grace, they were revealed many times through events in his daily life, but mainly in the way he performed and lived the Divine Liturgy. "I am forty four years a priest", Father Issa Houri informs, "and I have never met another priest like him. He was always in a state of prayer. Many times we celebrated the Divine Liturgy and I can simply say that he was a very faithful man. When he prayed, he did so with so much reverence, that I felt that he was in direct communication with God, with heaven".

With such a spirit and with such a lifestyle, Saint Philoumenos lived his life in Jerusalem. The people who knew him expressed great respect towards him, because he lived, according to his friend John Tleel, as if he was already a Saint. He lived with great asceticism and rigorousness in regard to fasting and prayer, with exact precision during holy services, with self-denial and devotion to serving people whom he helped spiritually, but also financially. In a few words he was, according to the blessed former Archbishop of Askalon, later Metropolitan of Skythopolis Arkadios, "a true monk in every manner".

both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.
Philippians 4:11-13

104 Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father. And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.
John 14:11-13

105 Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation. Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever. Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein.
Hebrews 13:7-9

106 Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according

to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.
Ephesians 1:15-23

107 As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving. Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.
Colossians 2:6-9

108 For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.
Ephesians 3:14-21

109 Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample.

The Martyrdom

His last appointment by the Patriarchate was in Neapolis (Naplus) as an abbot at Jacob's Well. Saint Philoumenos faced many tribulations during his service there. The ministry at Jacob's Well during that period was difficult because conditions there were very volatile. The Saint, however, did not refuse but went to serve there. Besides, the spirit of obedience which characterised him, his total trust in Divine Providence strengthened him on the road to martyrdom.

During his ministry, fanatical religious Jews would visit him often, demanding that the icons and the Cross be removed from the church, with the pretext that Jacob's Well was a Jewish shrine. Often Saint Philoumenos would explain to them that the Christian element was present in that location for almost two thousand years and therefore their demands were unfounded. This, however, had no effect on their reasoning.

The Saint often spoke about these tribulations to people with whom he was connected. The Metropolitan of Vostroi Hymaenaios, for example, related that the Saint told him many times that they threatened to kill him if he didn't leave Jacob's Well. Sister Metrodora, a nun of the Monastery of Saint Lazarus in Bethany recalls: "He came to the monastery a week before the martyrdom and wanted *prosforo*[138] in order to celebrate the Divine Liturgy. Present also was our Geronta, Father Theodosius, to whom the Saint said: 'What can I do, Geronta? The Jewish people threaten that they will kill me. What else can I do? Only martyrdom will save us.' "

Despite the threats, which he received, Saint Philoumenos had made the decision to remain at the Well. Father Eudokimos stated: "He was a man of sacrifice and duty. But he also had a deep faith in God and hope that even if they killed him, God would accept his martyrdom, because he showed obedience and went to serve at Jacob's Well".

In the afternoon of November 29th, 1979—the day on which our Church honours the memory of his namesake (*Saint Philoumenos*[139] martyred in 270) "strangers", according to the police report, trespassed on the premises of Jacob's Well. There was heavy rain on that day, and for this reason—due to the fact that there weren't any pilgrims around because of the bad weather – they found the opportunity to hide and remain in the monastery after 4:00 p.m. when the guard had already left. Possibly while the Saint was performing vespers, they attacked him with an axe, and having fiercely abused him, they killed him. They hit him on the face, cutting concurrently the fingers of his right hand, which he most likely placed in front of him while trying to protect himself. They struck also his jaw, his eyes and his legs. After that, they desecrated the Church, the Cross of the Altar and the Holy Altar itself and as they were leaving they threw a hand grenade destroying the place almost entirely.

The body of Saint Philoumenos was taken by the authorities of Tel Aviv for the autopsy and after six days they informed the fathers of the Holy Sepulchre that they could go to the morgue to receive it. Father Sophronius narrates: "I went with three other fathers of the Patriarchate and they gave him to us naked. When we inquired about his clothes they said: 'They are in Neapolis.' Fortunately, we had taken all that we needed in order to dress him properly. However, you cannot imagine how we felt when they gave him to us all cut up. His face was unrecognizable, bearing the stigmata of martyrdom. When I began dressing him – since the others could not; they were unable to look upon him due to the marks of his suffering – I spoke to him as if he were alive: 'My beloved elder, now you will help me dress you, because as you can see, I am all by myself.' When I started by placing the undershirt, he immediately lowered his first arm by himself, as he did with the other arm and his legs likewise. I would bend his legs in order to dress him and when I was done, he would extend them on his own."

When the body was prepared, it was first transported to the Patriarchate and thereafter to the church of Saint Thekla. The funeral service took place there, on December 4th, 1979, in the presence of the fathers of the Holy Sepulchre, relatives of the Saint and a multitude of people not only Orthodox, but also people of other faiths, including Muslims.

The Exhumation Of The Saint's Relics

Four years after the death of Saint Philoumenos, on Tuesday November 29th, 1983, the Patriarchate made the decision to uncover his relics and transfer them to the church at Jacob's Well to be buried where he was martyred. Meanwhile, Father Ioustinos had received orders to prepare an empty tomb at the Well, in which they would place the relics of the Saint. However, on the day of the uncovering he was notified to stop the preparations and go to the cemetery of Holy Zion where the unearthing was taking place because everyone present had become witnesses to a remarkable incident.

The Archbishop of Qatar Makarios remembers: "A little wooden box was brought close to the Saint's tomb, in which they were going to place the relics. After that, they started digging. When they had removed the topsoil, approximately fifty to sixty centimetres deep, there arose a pleasant fragrance. They therefore kept digging and when they reached the casket, Father Eudokimos went down and began removing things from it. In the meantime, the fragrance had become very intense. Finally, we saw that the body of the Saint was incorrupt. With care, other fathers went down and helped bring the body to the surface. It was whole, in a way that you could lift it up and bring it to an upright position." The lower limbs were found in mud and had disintegrated because of the dampness (since over the grave was a faucet, which frequently poured out water). The part of the head, which had received the axe blows, had fallen off. The lower jaw though, as well as the rest of the body parts were incorrupt. The skin was dark in colour and was wrinkled, but it preserved all of its characteristics. The beard and the hairs on his head and hands, on the legs, the chest and the forehead still existed. The clothes as well, in which the Saint had been buried had not fallen apart. It was, by all means, a holy body similar to those of Saint Savvas and Saint Catherine.

Subsequently, in keeping with tradition, the body was washed with wine. Then, Father Sophronios and The Archbishop of Qatar Makarios, who was still at that time a novice-student at the seminary, assumed the responsibility to take care of the body and to clothe it in new garments. Archbishop Makarios remembers: "We removed his old clothes without taking him out of his casket, and we began to dress him. We dressed him with an undershirt, a button-down shirt, a pair of trousers, even a cassock ('zostikon'), robes ('rassa'), priest's stole ('epitrachelion') and the priest's hat ('kalymayche'). We put all those on without tearing anything, because the body – especially the arms – were very supple."

When the holy relics of the Saint had been prepared they were placed in a new casket in the Holy Altar of the Church of Holy Zion. There, a service especially for the Saint was celebrated for the first time by the attending fathers of the Holy Sepulchre. All the fathers present were overwhelmed with great joy and emotion, because at that moment all were thinking that they had just performed the unearthing of a Saint.

The holy relic of Saint Philoumenos stayed in the Church of Holy Zion for a period of time and subsequently was buried in a new tomb made of cement. On the 8th of January 1985, after the decision of the Patriarch, the second unearthing of the Saint's relics took place. This time though, the relics were found floating in a large quantity of water because the tomb had absorbed and contained the water from the rain. As a result, the body, which again had a strong divine fragrance, had partially decayed because of the humidity. The fathers placed it in a reliquary, to the north of the Holy Alter in the church of the Holy Trinity in the School of Zion, where it stayed for twenty four years.

The presence of the Saint's relics in the School of Zion was a great blessing, not only for its students and the teachers of the school, but also for those who revere the Saint and journeyed there in order to venerate. Many times the relics produced the divine fragrance and the Saint never stopped helping those who with faith called upon him.

Many miracles were mentioned which are attributed to his intercessions; indeed, many of them were and are still witnessed today in different countries. Indicatively, The Archbishop of Qatar Makarios tells of a miracle that happened to a family from Ramallah who knew the Saint when he was alive, since he used to visit them

(For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.) For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.
Philippians 3:17-21

110 Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread. And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.
John 6:32-35

111 I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat? Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. As

regularly. "The parents – permanent residents of Ramallah – had four children, three boys and a girl. Their youngest son Samir Odeh had gone to Greece to become a dentist and soon after was diagnosed with cancer. When the diagnosis was confirmed, he and his father travelled to America for treatment. In the meantime, his mother and sister came here to Zion to venerate the Saint. They also brought presents for the children and they told me: 'Father, can we celebrate a Liturgy and pray to the Saint for Samir, because the test results from America are discouraging, the doctors are worried, and so are we even more so…' We therefore offered a supplication and celebrated the Divine Liturgy and when I communicated again with them a couple of days later, they told me: 'Father, Samir went again for medical tests and the results were clear, even the doctors themselves are wondering how this happened!' "

The Completion Of The Church At Jacob's Well

The situation at the Well of Jacob remained volatile and very dangerous even after the Saint's martyrdom. Saint Philoumenos' successor at the Well, Father Ioustinos, had to face, after the Saint's martyrdom, many difficulties. He gained, however, strength from the Lord, but also from his martyred predecessor. Thus, with persistence he set as his goal the completion of the semi-completed church that had pre-existed at the Well and then the transference there of the relics of Saint Philoumenos. He believed without a doubt that he who had shed his blood at the pilgrimage site would help him find a way to build the church and console him with the presence of his venerable relics.

The completion of such a grand task, without the existence of the necessary regional planning permission, nor the bare economic means, seemed at the time a utopian dream. The miraculous interventions of the Saints at the pilgrimage, of Saint Photeini the Samaritan, and the Holy Martyr Philoumenos, made the construction of the church possible.

In 2005, while the church had almost reached its completion, it was attacked by two Israeli tanks. "At the time of the attack at 3:45 pm", Father Ioustinos remembers, "I was in the abbot's quarters. Suddenly, I saw from the window a canon shell hit the church. 'Saint Jacob …, Saint Photeini …,' I shouted. 'I built your house from the little the poor had to give. Protect it, because before tanks I can do nothing!' However when I heard the second blast beneath the belfry next to the cross I became despondent and said: 'Hey, Father Philoumenos, if you are a Saint, show me it now!' and then truly, with my sinful eyes I saw the Saint with his grey cassock on top of the cross in front of the church waving his hands, as if he were sending something away. Then I realised that what he was sending away were three canon shells, which fell down without exploding and rolled onto the cobbled floor below as if they were bottles. In this way the tanks departed without achieving anything and the church was saved".

In 2008 the church was in full completion. An elegant church, that is in keeping with the liturgical character of the pilgrimage and reigns majestically over a non-christian environment, consolidating in the area the Orthodox Christian presence "unto the ages of ages".

Canonization

Saint Philoumenos according to blessed Gerontas Seraphim, of the Monastery of Saint Savvas, lived a saintly life from a young age and that is why God honoured him with martyrdom. At the same time He gave him abundant Holy Grace, so as to perform miracles, cast away temptations and heal illnesses with the purpose of healing not only the body, but also the eternal soul. Many are the references to the miraculous interventions of the Saint in Jerusalem, Greece, Cyprus and elsewhere, which began from the time of his worldly life and increased after his martyrdom. The Saint responds to the prayers of people who call to him and he fulfils their requests which please God. Sometimes, however, he intervenes miraculously even in the lives of people who do not know him, and he becomes for them "known", "a friend", staunchly interceding to God. One characteristic

the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever.
John 6:48-58

112 1 Cor. 12:27, 12-14, 10:17; Rom. 12:5; Eph. 3:6

113 When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you? What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before? It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life. But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him.
John 6:61-64

115 *cf. Kontakion* for the departed faithful (Translator's note)

116 Let not then your good be evil spoken of: For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men. Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.
Romans 14:16-19

117 *cf.* First Morning prayer of St. Basil the Great and First Post-Communion Prayer (Translator's note)

118 Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant. Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led. Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost. Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of

experience from the appearance of the Saint in her life, is described by Maria L., when she visited the Monastery of Saint Nikolaos in Orounda in Spring 2006. She entered the church and began with reverence to venerate the icons of the iconostasis. When she came to the icon of Saint Philoumenos, she stopped, and looked at the icon full of emotion and began sobbing uncontrollably. After a short while she recounted to one of the sisters who was in the church at the time that, "a short time ago I had gone through a great ordeal with my health. I had been admitted to hospital for some treatments, but the doctors did not give us any hope of my surviving. Yet while I was in this very difficult state, I saw in a dream a priest, who wore *epanokalymavchion*[140] just like the one here in the icon. The priest stood next to me, 'passed' over my body a black fabric that he had been wearing that was similar to a mantle and he left. The next morning I was totally healthy and even the doctors could not understand it, they gave me permission to return to my house. A few days later I was present at Mrs. G's house and there I saw a small icon of Saint Philoumenos. I was shocked when I realised the priest that had visited me at the hospital was the Saint in the icon. Mrs G. informed me of the life of the Saint and that I could venerate the icon and his relics at the Monastery of Saint Nikolaos, in Orounda and that is why I came here today".

Saint Philoumenos was established as a martyr in the consciousness of the faithful, even from the first years after his martyrdom. It is characteristic that in his own country, Cyprus, he was revered very early on through Great Vespers, *Artoklasia*[141], and Divine Liturgy, both in the area of his origin, Orounda, and in the parishes of the Metropolis of Limassol.

Also, in1999, through the initiative of Metropolitan of Morphou Neophytos, the compilation of events around his life began. This information was handed to the newly formed sisterhood of the *Holy Monastery of Saint Nikolaos, Orounda*[142] , to which was given the task of fulfilling the study, the writing, and the overseeing of the publication of the life of the *Saint*[143]. Also at the Monastery, the preparation for the construction of the holy church honouring the Saint has been set in motion. The architectural plans have been completed. The church will be southeast of the older buildings of the Monastery and will have a cruciform design with a dome.

The due honour to Saint Philoumenos, both in his home country and also in Greece, Jerusalem, and elsewhere, was the beginning of the process of his official ecclesiastical inclusion in the order of Orthodox Saints. On 25th of August 2008, his relics were transferred from Holy Zion to Neapolis (Naplus), the place where the Saint was martyred. During the transfer, a divine fragrance came over the body. Some days afterward, on the 30th August, his Beatitude Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos carried out the consecration rites for the church of Saint Photeini and the chapel of the Saint. The consecration of the chapels, which were dedicated to Saint Philoumenos and Saint Ioustinos the philosopher, were performed by the Metropolitan of Morphou and the Metropolitan of Capitolina respectively. Today, the holy relics of the Saint are kept in a reliquary and people have the blessing and the opportunity to genuflect showing due reverence to theme.

Thirty years after the Saint's martyrdom, on 29th November 2009, the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, His Beatitude Theophilos, offered a great honour officially to the Saint by the canonization of Saint Philoumenos, placing him among the many Saints of the Orthodox Church. The holy ceremony took place in the church of Saint Photeini of Samareia in the presence and attendance of the Patriarch of Jerusalem and other Bishops, and also people from Cyprus, the Holy Land, Greece and many other countries.

"Ye Are My Witnesses…[144]"

Saint Philoumenos, as the first martyr of the "recent times" in which we live—a time of little faith, confusion, doubt, disruption and excessive worry over the future—comforts us, supports us and calls us to martyrdom with him. He calls us to mimic the life of the Lord, who with His sacrifice on the cross, showed that the way to His kingdom is nothing more than the way of the cross. This is the way that was followed by all the martyrs from the first centuries till today, and to this he calls us to follow him.

Moreover, this is the spiritual inheritance that the Saint himself has left us with, through his own miraculous intervention. The following miraculous event happened a few days before the canonization ceremony of the Saint at the pilgrimage of Jacob's Well. The abbot of the pilgrimage, Father

administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will. For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ
1 Corinthians 12:1-12

119 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.
Ephesians 4:11-16

120 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For

we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.
Ephesians 6:10-13

121 If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.
Colossians 3:1-4

122 Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;) That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth. And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.
Ephesians 6:1-4

123 *Iconostasis*: A screen or wall which serves as a stable support for icons and marks the boundary between the nave and the altar or sanctuary in a church. The name is also given to an area designated by many Orthodox Christians for prayer before icons at their home.

124 *Synaxaria*: An abridged collection of the "Lives of the Saints," intended for reading in public worship and to nourish the personal prayer life of the faithful.

125 *Kalyvites*: Literal translation hut-dweller. The celebration of Saint John Kalyvites is on January 15th.

126 *Stavrovouni*: Literally meaning the mountain of the Cross. The same name is attested to an ancient monastery, built on the top of a mountain found in the district of Larnaca in Cyprus

Ioustinos, had gone to the Church in order to prepare some priestly garments. To his surprise, he noticed that in one of the locked glass cabinets in the vesting sacristy, there was a *maktro*[145] that had been disturbed, underneath it was a small silver chalice. Shocked, he opened the cabinet and took the chalice upon which was inscribed the following:

> "Chalice of the Blood of martyrdom shed for the house of the Lord of Holy Martyr Saint Philoumenos of Cyprus, 16 November 1979. The chalice, which I drink; drink also".[146]

The small silver chalice contained remains of the Saint's blood, shed at the time of his martyrdom in the area of Jacob's Well. This miraculous finding was without doubt a great blessing of God for the pilgrimage. The inscription on it though, extended the divine blessing beyond this place of worship, calling all of us, but also those who are to come after us, to "co-martyrdom"; participation that is, in the martyrdom and witness of Saint Philoumenos.

Martyrdom in Christ can be lived in many ways: it is experienced as patience in the face of sorrows and illness; as a tough struggle against the sinful passions that are at war with us; as repentance for our own mistakes and passions; as self-sacrifice, as denial of ourselves; as unwavering acknowledgement of our faith both through example and through word. The highest expression however occurs by martyrdom through the shedding of blood, with a death that eliminates the kingdom of death, in order that Life, the True Life may triumph, which is Christ.

As Father Eudokimos states: "Our Lord never forsakes us. He gives strength and His Grace to people, so today we can say that the consciousness of martyrdom is constant in the life of the Church. So we don't forget that as members of the Church we have the common obligation to lay witness to the Light: '*What our eyes saw, what our ears heard and what our hands have touched upon: the only Truth that is Christ*.[147]"

February 4

"Impose upon yourself some form of penance [*Epitimija*] for the sins of others. If you have judged or punished someone, impose upon yourself a form of penance. You should also suffer voluntarily for the sins of sinners. This is pleasing to God. This mystery was known by the saints, who condemned themselves for the sins of others. Even non-Christian peoples perceived this mystery. There exists this custom in China: When an executioner beheads a criminal who is sentenced to death, he then approaches the judge and informs him that the verdict was carried out. The judge reimburses him with a silver coin because he has executed a criminal, and then he orders that he be given forty lashes for having killed a man. Christian saints profoundly understood the mystery of sin and human injustice. For the saints, every human sin has a history as long as the distance from Adam to us.

Jane Swan

A Biography Of Patriarch Tikhon

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Chapter One—Years Of Preparation

In 1865, the town of Toropets in the province of Pskov was almost untouched by any of the advantages or disadvantages of the modern era. The nearest railroad was 200 versts[148] away, and the old traditional Russian ways were still fully maintained. Life was patriarchal in character and slow in tempo. Industry was unknown and the economy of the town was dependent on the agrarian cycle of the surrounding area. Twenty-six years before, Modest Mussorgsky had been born near Toropets, but his fame had not yet trickled back, nor was he ever to bring such glory to the town as the man Vasily Ivanovich Bellavin, who was born January 19, 1865, old style.[149]

The family of Bellavin had long been connected with the Church. Vasily's father was a priest who had spent his entire life at Toropets and, as was the custom, his sons also would be expected to enter the priesthood[150]. Toropets[151] was a town bathed in religious atmosphere. Churches set the keynote. It could be compared to Moscow, for both were ancient, both were primarily religious strongholds and towns only as an afterthought, and both contained famous relics to which pilgrims continually flocked.

Except for the bare outlines of schooling[152], little is known about the youth of Vasily. He was one of three sons, all of whom lived till manhood. It was just after Vasily became bishop of Alaska, at the age of 35, that his youngest brother died, and the new bishop accompanied the body back to Toropets for burial. This incident had been predicted many years before by Vasily's father in one of those curiously prophetic dreams that seem to come to people close to the soil. One night the old Bellavin had dreamed that he spoke with his dead mother. The mother warned him of his imminent death and then went on to say that of his three sons, one would be protector[153], one would die a youth, and one would be brought back to Toropets, and Vasily would become great.

In 1878, Vasily entered the Pskov Seminary. Seminaries in Russia provided free religious training for future priests. Seminary education was usually the end of a priest's formal schooling and was finished when the student was twenty. A few of the most brilliant students were elected to continue their studies at one of the four academies[154] in Russia. These men were trained as learned theologians and professors, and often, after taking vows, they became Bishops.

Vasily was one of the few selected to enter the Academy of Divinity at St Petersburg, where he went in 1884 at the age of 19. Since the normal age at entrance was 20, this attests to his superior scholastic abilities. From almost the beginning of his studies, his comrades him "Patriarch"[155], and the nickname was an affectionate one. The little that

127 *Typikon*: Order of church services and the rule of monastic community life and rule of prayer

128 *Monastic prayer rule* (μοναχικός κανόνας): The personal daily prayer rule of each monk carried out alone in his cell.

129 *Supplication Canon* or *Paraclesis*: A service most often addressed to The Most Holy Mother of God, but may be used to seek the intercessions of any saint.

130 *Metochion*: The dependency of a monastery.

131 *Typikaris*: The monk responsible for overseeing the '*Typikon*'

132 Taken from the Lenten Triodion, Aposticha of the Lauds, on Cheesefare Monday

133 *Geronta*(s): (Greek, Γέροντα pronounced *yeronda* or *staretz* in Russian; both literally meaning *elder*) is a holy person who has received the gift of spiritual direction, often a monk or hermit (not necessarily a priest), in the Church.

134 *Horologion*: (Greek: Ὡρολόγιον), or *Book of Hours*, provides the permanent parts of the Daily Cycle of services used by the Orthodox Church.

135 *Miniaion*: Book containing everyday services for each month

136 *Paraklitiki*: Greek service book containing weekly resurrectional material for all seven days.

137 *Ninth hour*: Brief prayer service found in the Horologion, performed just before the Vespers service.

138 *Prosforo*: Eucharistic bread

139 *Saint Philoumenos*: Martyred in Ankara in the year 270, during the reign of the Emperor Aurelian

140 *Epanokalymavchion*: In Greek practise, a veil is placed, but is not attached, on top of a kalymavchion covering the sides and back of the head.

141 Artoklasia (Greek ἀρτοκλασία, meaning "breaking of bread"): A service held

at the end of Vespers. Both Great Vespers and Artoklasia are usually both performed the evening before a Feast Day.

142 The Holy Monastery of Saint Nikolaos can be found next to the village of Orounda, where Saint Philoumenos came from. The history of the Monastery probably began in the 12th Century. Up to about 1830 it was for monks only. In time it was ransacked by Turks and deserted. In 2001 it was rebuilt and has since then functioned as a Monastery with nuns.

143 The first edition was published in 2003 and the second expanded edition in 2013. The service to the Saint was also published (2003, 2009), which was compiled by Mr Charalampos Bousia, the great hymnographer of the church of Alexandria.

144 Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. Isaiah 43:10

145 *Maktro*: (μάκτρο in Greek) Cloth used to wipe the lips of the faithful after Holy Communion and used to cover the chalice.

146 The date inscribed on the chalice is the Saint's feast date according to the old Julian calendar.

147 Homily of Father Eudokimos of Saint Savvas Monastery.

148 200 versts is approximately 130 miles

149 Russia, unlike Western Europe, continued to reckon by the Julian calendar. This meant a time lag of twelve days before 1900 in comparison with the Gregorian calendar, and after 1900, a time lag of thirteen days. Unless indicated, the author will date by the Gregorian calendar.

150 Vasily's father, Father Ioann Timofeevich Bellavin,

has been written about him by his friends speaks of his constant popularity with his colleagues for his gentle ways, complete simplicity, and ever-ready wit. The young Vasily, as well as the later Patriarch Tikhon, had a joke and kind word for everyone156.

During his studies at the St Petersburg Academy, a very popular librarian of the Academy was dismissed because of his political leanings. The library belonged completely to the students, being owned, supported, and operated by them[157]. Up to this time, they had themselves elected the librarian, and consequently were incensed over this action of the rector. So violent were the protests that the students refused to elect a new librarian. The rector appointed Vasily as the new librarian, and given his great popularity, the students ceased protesting and accepted the rector's decision.

In 1888, Vasily finished the St Petersburg Academy still as a layman[158] and returned to the Pskov Seminary as a Master in Dogmatic and Moral theology. He settled in the town of Pskov, and here his utter lack of material interest soon showed itself by the manner in which he lived. His home was a tiny annex to a simple wooden house near the church of St Nicholas, but such simplicity of life only further endeared him to his friends. Between 1888 and 1891, he continued teaching at the Pskov Seminary, and it was only in 1891 that he took vows to enter monastic life. The ceremony took place on the second floor of a church, and so great was the rush of people that special supports for the ceiling had to be added quickly, to bear the weight of the people. Thus at the age of 26, Vasily Ivanovich Bellavin became the Russian Orthodox monk Tikhon[159].

From the Pskov Seminary, Tikhon, in March 1892, was transferred to a seminary in Kholm, in the province of Lublin in Poland, where he was made superintendent. From the Kholm Seminary, Tikhon was for a short time transferred to the Kazan Theological School as rector with the rank of archimandrite[160], but he soon returned to the Kholm Seminary having been made rector.

A detailed account of Tikhon's work during his five year rectorship at the Kholm Seminary is given by Metropolitan Eulogy who was a teacher at the seminary at that time. Tikhon introduced literary and musical meetings, which took place once a week on a week day evening and every Sunday after the morning services. Lectures, discussions, and concerts were presented, and the public was invited. After each meeting, the rector invited all for tea. Almost immediately after he was appointed, he had a new second chapel erected at the Seminary in memory of the finding of the relics of Theodosius of Chernigov. There was a daily service at the new chapel, and each day one of the six forms did the singing. The local elementary form children were invited to perform on holidays. Such methods ensured his immediate popularity, and soon he was invited to serve at all the local churches. This serving at other churches became part of Tikhon's work throughout his life and the enormous demands made on him, no matter where he went, attest to his popularity.

Kholm, by history and tradition, was one of the sorest spots for the Church authorities. The town was composed chiefly of Roman Catholics constantly at odds with the Orthodox Catholics and a large proportion of Uniates[161], who were considered as potential Orthodox converts[162]. Throughout the ages, there had been constant friction among the three groups. Tikhon, with his gentle unprovocative ways, was an excellent person to be placed in such a position, and he quickly became popular with all groups. So successful was he in allaying suspicion and hostility that Archbishop Flavian chose him for his personal assistant. Under his tactful administration, many Uniates returned to the Orthodox confession.

Reports of his successful work reached the Synod, and a movement began to make him a bishop. However, by canon law, no monk can become bishop until he is 33, but in this case, the Synod made an exception and consecrated him Bishop of Lublin on October 19, 1897[163]. After the consecration, he returned to Kholm for a year as Vicarial Bishop[164] of the Kholm Diocese.

On September 14, 1898, Tikhon was made Bishop of the Aleutian Islands and Alaska[165], whose diocesan see was located in San Francisco. From 1899 to 1907, he remained in the United States with only one quick trip to Russia in those eight years.

When the news reached people in Kholm that their bishop was being transferred to an independent see of his own, riots broke out. He was forced to hold farewell services in each individual church, and street fighting occurred in an attempt to stop him from going. On the day of his actual departure, people threw themselves on the tracks to keep the train from leaving and had to be removed forcibly.

It was while Bishop Tikhon was en route to his new see, his young brother, who was accompanying him, died and Tikhon took the body back to Toropets for burial, thus fulfilling his father's dream[166].

Tikhon's years in the America were not only extremely productive, as far as successful administration of his diocese was concerned, but for Tikhon personally, they were years of useful experience that served him well later on. Later in life, he mentioned the fact that his American sojourn widened not only his ecclesiastical horizon but also his political outlook[167].

In all the recorded sermons and speeches, there is seldom any personal reference. Early in life, in his manner of living, and in his dealings with people, he completely effaced all thought of self. It is only in his first sermon in America, and perhaps because of his recent sad visit to Toropets with the body of his brother[168], that we find a reference to "my old mother in Russia." Only through this comment has it been possible to establish the fact that his mother survived the father and lived to see the four boys grown to manhood[169].

In 1905, because of the great increase of Orthodox parishes in America, chiefly under Tikhon's guidance, the American Mission was made into an Archdiocese, and Tikhon was promoted to the rank of archbishop at the age of forty. The diocese was divided into two Sub-Vicariates, one located in Alaska and one in Brooklyn, New York. A cathedral was built and completed in New York City on 97th Street, and the official see was removed there. Along with the St Nicholas Cathedral in New York, Tikhon established a Theological Seminary[170] in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and the St Tikhon's Monastery in South Canaan, Pennsylvania. The number of parishes increased from 15 to 70 in the U.S.A. and all the parishes became self-supporting. Again, as in Kholm, Tikhon continued his missionary activities[171] among the Uniates, and a large number returned to the Orthodox confession[172].

While Pobedonosteff was still high procurator, Tikhon was called back from America only once to be a member of the Synod[173]. As soon as the session was over, he returned to America and stayed until he was transferred to Yaroslav on January 25, 1907.

Tikhon's actions in Yaroslav at first created only amazement. He never refused to serve in the churches, monasteries, or even the smallest village parish churches. He constantly made trips to churches without any pomp or ceremony, examined minutely all the affairs of the church, and even climbed up to the church belfries[174] to see the bells. Amazement soon turned to love, for with high and low, he maintained the same friendly manner, usually speaking kindly and always ready with a joke. Parish priests soon came to expect the archbishop at any time, arriving on foot without fanfare, examining books, discussing local problems, and remaining quick to notice all the details of the provincial church life.

In 1913, Tikhon[175] was appointed Archbishop of Vilnius and had to leave Yaroslav. The entire province was saddened, and at a grand farewell ceremony, he was made an honorary citizen of the city, the first time any bishop was ever so honored.

It was in Vilnius that Tikhon's former work with Roman Catholics and Uniates both in Kholm and in the U.S.A. stood him in good stead. The Vilnius Diocese was composed largely of Roman Catholics and Uniates. A further complication was the strong historical animosity existing between the Russian Orthodox and the Polish population. Here, the church was forced to display more pomp and ceremony to appeal to the Polish temperament, and such a role was difficult for a man of Tikhon's character. The local Polish population were chiefly members of the intelligentsia, quick to criticize and quick to be offended. The majority of them were Catholics and deeply distrusted Russian Orthodoxy. Tikhon was unable to maintain the necessary formality while conducting services, but he then would shock many by being driven to the magnificent summer home for the Archbishop in a simple carriage with only a small cap on his head. Around Trynopol, where the Archbishop's home was located, was a section known as Calvary, which consisted of a series of Roman Catholic chapels marking the stations of the cross. Here it was Tikhon's wont to walk dressed only in the plain monk's frock and cap. Soon, the familiar figure was greeted on all sides by the Catholic priests and peasants, Jews, and Uniates, and a growing respect and liking grew up for the cheerful archbishop. However, this slow and constructive work of allaying distrust and building up united foundations, free of national and religious dissension, was soon interrupted by the outbreak of the first World War. Vilnius soon became a center of war activities, and within a few months the frontline passed over it.

At first, all the secular and religious institutions were removed to Moscow, and here Tikhon was transferred, bringing with him the most valuable of the church vessels and Holy Relics, but this proved too far from his diocese, so Tikhon moved to Disna, which was on the edge of the Vilna diocese.

From here Tikhon carried on extensive war work. His activities were at first with the refugees, but gradually they came to be centered with the soldiers at the front. He visited the front personally, conducted services, was caught under

was born in 1822 in the village of Sopki, where his father served as the priest. Ioann was ordained a priest in 1847 and in 1849 assigned to the Resurrection Church in the village of Klin (Toropets district, Pskov province), where he served over twenty years before his transfer to Toropets. Vasily was born in Klin and was four years old when the family moved to Toropets in 1869. —S. M. K.

151 The history of Toropets dates back to pagan times. A large fortress is still there, rising about 42 yards high and 500 yards in circumference, whose beginnings are buried in legend. Originally the town was devoted to warlike enterprises, having battles with the Lithuanians, and as late as the seventeenth century, fighting against the Zaporozhye Cossacks in the Ukraine. Early wealth based on the silk trade had dwindled completely, until by 1870 the census revealed a population of only 5,161, all of Great Russian origin. The famous Nebin Trinity-Sergius Monastery, built in 1592, was only two miles from the town and influenced the atmosphere of the surrounding area. The town was surrounded half by forests and half by tilled land. Snow covered the land from November to April, and the lake was covered with ice all winter long. The weather was cloudy all year.

152 The priest Alexander Rozhdestvensky in his memoirs of the Patriarch entitled, *His Holiness Tikhon, Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia* (London, 1923), spoke of Tikhon's readiness to write his friends' essays for them and explain any problems of theology that they could not understand. Apparently his friends were all too ready to take advantage of Vasily's good nature.

153 The word *pechal'nik* is almost impossible to translate into English. It means a protector or caretaker, as a term for a person who looks after others with great anxiety and concern,

bombardment, and did such splendid work maintaining the morale of the soldiers that he was awarded a military order with swords for distinguished conduct.

During these war years, he frequently was called on to attend meetings of the Synod, and was at one sent to Tobolsk to investigate the complex affair of Bishop Varnava's glorification of relics. In the early winter of 1917, Lvov, after the Revolution, became high procurator. In the first meeting in March, 1917, at his suggestion, a Synod appeal was issued which spoke of the revolution as the "will of God"[176] and begged that all dissentions should be set aside, all quarrels ended, and the war successfully persecuted under the Provisional Government, which would work for the good of Russia. Prayers were changed, and mention of the Czar was replaced by the "true-believing Provisional Government." Friction became so strong that Lvov—asserting his power as chief procurator—dismissed the Synod in April 1917 and called a new one, which retained only two old members, Archbishop Sergy of Vladimir and Archbishop, Exarch of Georgia.

With the abdication of the tsar, a period of ecclesiastical revolutionary activity swept some of the lower clergy who were eager to settle scores with unpopular bishops. Things became so chaotic that the Synod adopted a rule declaring that the bishop should be elected by the clergy and laymen of the diocese. In actual fact, most bishops were reelected, but although Moscow had been sent Bishop Hermogen by Synod[177] appointment to replace the disgraced Makary, the people of Moscow decided to elect their own Metropolitan. A delegation of clergy and laymen were sent to Petrograd to investigate the records of possible candidates and departed with a long list. Tikhon was almost an unknown personality to the Moscow people, so it was a complete surprise to all when he received the highest number of ballots at the official election[178], which was held before the miraculous Vladimir icon of the Virgin in the Cathedral of the Assumption in Moscow.

Almost immediately, it became known that the new Metropolitan would officiate in any church, so he was besieged on all sides with invitations. To the great amazement of all, when the service was over, Tikhon gladly visited the parishioners in their homes, no matter how small or humble they might be. Soon, his black-clad figure became a familiar sight to the Moscow citizens, and official reverence was replaced with warm personal love.

and usually is applied to parents. This might possibly indicate that this brother would be the eldest one of the family and, after the early death of the father, may have been instrumental in the bringing up of his two younger brothers. No evidence, however, shows the respective ages of the three Bellavin brothers. Vasily Bellavin was one of four sons (not three); the others were Pavel (1857–1881), Ioann (1859–1891), and Mikhail (1873–1902); the date of his father's death has not yet been established, but it was evidently in or around 1894. Although Swan does not cite her source for the father's prophetic dream, most versions state not that one brother will be a *pechal'nik* (someone who grieves over others), but rather an unhappy or pitiable person. Since all three of St Tikhon's brothers died relatively young, it is not clear to which brothers the dream refers. —S. M. K.

154 The four academies were in St Petersburg, Moscow, Kiev, and Kazan.

155 Perhaps nothing so reveals the character of a person as the nicknames he picks up in life. While Vasily was still at the seminary at Pskov, he was called "Bishop." This was when he was just sixteen years old, and when he later entered the Academy in St Petersburg, he was at once christened "Patriarch" by his classmates. The spiritual force within him must have been immediately clear to others from a very early age. In later years, old friends reminded Tikhon of this jocular prophetic title.

156 Even Julius Hecker, in his completely biased and highly critical book *Religion Under the Soviets* (New York: Vanguard Press, 1927), was forced to fall back on Patriarch Tikhon's happy temperament.

157 This student library was quite separate from the religious library, which belonged to the academy, and had been

March 14

We can hardly find a better example of why we should not become lazy or procrastinate in prayer and work until tomorrow, than by this example, which is given to us by **St. Ephraim the Syrian**: *"Once a brother was inspired by the devil to think: 'Give yourself rest today and tomorrow rise for vigil.' But he answered the thought, 'Who knows, perhaps, I will not even get up tomorrow, that is why I need to rise today.' Before work, he was also inspired with this thought: 'Give yourself rest today and complete your work tomorrow.' And again he responded, 'No, I will complete my work today, and the Lord will take care of tomorrow.' "* **St. Anthony** teaches: *"Before the dawn of each day, arrange your life as though it is your last day on earth and you will protect yourself from sins."*

Right Rev. Tikhon
Bishop Of Alaska And The Aleutian Islands

Address Delivered On First Entering The Once Cathedral Church At Sitka

The Russian Orthodox American Messenger, Vol. 3, No. 15, 1–13 August 1899, pp. 394–395

It is not without deep emotion that I, this day, enter for the first time this holy temple, and this emotion will not, methinks, be unintelligible to you, my brethren. This was once a Cathedral Church. Here, in Sitka, lived the pastors of the Aleutian fold,—chief of them the Metropolitan Innocentius of undying memory. Here was the centre of a diocese's church life and church government. Here, too, was the seat of the country's civil administration. But, in the Preacher's words, "*To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven*" [Eccles. 3:1][179]. And so, here in Sitka, things are not as they were thirty years ago. True, Sitka is still the seat of the country's civil administration, but the ruling power is no longer Russia's, but America's. And what of the Orthodox Church? Will she endure and stay in the face of so many changes, amid so many conflicting currents? There be prophets who would predict that, in twenty five years from now, there will remain no trace of Orthodox Christianity in Alaska…

The destinies of the world, of empires and nations, are in the hand of God. He, the Almighty, "exalteth and abaseth, maketh rich or poor, giveth life or death."[180] In His hands also lies the fate of the Orthodox Church in Alaska, and all that is left for us is to "humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, and cast all our care upon Him, for He careth for us." [1 Peter 5:6–7][181]

But, while we place our hope in the Lord, my brethren, let us not ourselves be remiss and infirm of spirit.

Ye have heard in today's Gospel Lesson that the Church of God is founded and built upon the firm rock of professed faith in Christ, the Son of God (Matth. 7:24-27)[182]. And wheresoever the faith in Christ abideth firmly in men's hearts, there, in spite of circumstances and any disasters, the Church of Christ will stand firmly. Whether we let our thoughts carry us back to the first ages of Chistianity, or to a more recent period,—one century back, when Christianity was being introduced in wild Alaska, we shall find that through men poor in substance, but rich in faith, love and eudurance, the Church of Christ grew, throve, and waxed strong. Bearing this in mind, do ye also, brethren, lay within your hearts a firm foundation for the Church of Christ to stand upon, be ye even as strong and living stones (1 Peter 2:5)[183]. Having tasted in the Orthodox Church the good Word of God, and having there laboured in love, do ye, in

started by the students themselves who sold personal belongings to buy the books and periodicals.

158 Most of the students took monastic vows in their third and fourth years at the academy, and it was rare that any of them graduated while still laymen. Although in earlier times academy students frequently took monastic vows as their first step on the path to becoming bishops, this was no longer the case in the St Petersburg Academy after the 1860s. —S. M. K.

159 Rozhdestvensky, *His Holiness Tikhon*, p. 4, tells how Tikhon's voice remained firm and clear as he spoke his vows, "Yes with God's help," and many in the church were moved with tears by the pathos of the moment.

160 The ranks of the clergy are as follows—*Black or monastic:* hierodeacon, hieromonk, igumen, archimandrite, bishop, archbishop, metropolitan, patriarch. *White or secular*: deacon, protodeacon, priest, archpriest, protopresbyter.

161 In 1595–1596, the Orthodox bishops in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (modern Ukraine and Belarus) decided to break communion with the Orthodox patriarch of Constantinople and to enter into union with the Roman Catholic Church. These bishops and those of their flock who followed them were obliged to accept the doctrines of the Church of Rome and the authority of the pope, but were allowed to retain Eastern liturgical rites. The adherents of this union are commonly called "Greek Catholics" or "Uniates."—Ed.

162 The Kholm region had been predominantly Greek Catholic (once more commonly referred to as "Uniates," though this term today is seen as condescending). Russian authorities suppressed the Greek Catholic Church in the Russian Empire over the course of the

the Apostle's words, shew the same diligence unto the end (Hebr. 6:5, 10–11)[184].

Therefore, brethren, be watchful, guard against open or concealed attacks against your faith, *quit ye like men* against your enemies, *stand firm in the faith* which ye have received from your fathers as a sacred and precious heirloom, guard and treasure it sacredly, more than the apple of your eye, and stablish yourselves in it more and more firmly. Then, *though the enemy arm himself against you, ye shall not fear nor shall ye be troubled,* for within you the *foundation* shall stand firmly—the holy Orthodox Church; and the gates of hell, sayeth the Savior, *shall not prevail against it* (Matth. 16:18)[185].

Sitka.

19-th of June 1899

January 20

As compassionate and lenient as the saints were toward human weakness, so terribly unyielding and unbending were they with regard to the confession of the true dogmas of the Faith. Thus, **St. Nicholas of Myra** in Lycia struck **Arius** with his hand at the First Ecumenical Council [Nicaea, 325 A.D.]. **St. Anthony** left his desert to come to Alexandria to publicly unmask **Arius**. **St. Euthymius**, being greatly pressured by the **Empress Eudocia** and the false **Patriarch Theodosius**, and being unable to debate rationally with them, left the monastery and hid in the desert; an example followed by all other distinguished monks thereafter. Euthymius remained in the desert until the pseudo-patriarch was ousted and Orthodoxy confirmed. When, in Jerusalem, the greatest agitation surfaced in the name of the emperor against the Fourth Ecumenical Council [Chalcedon, 451 A.D.], and when the entire population was frightened by the heretics, then **St. Theodosius the Great**, already burdened with old age, came to Jerusalem as a fearless soldier of Christ, entered the Great Church, ascended the stairs, waved his hands and said to the people: *"If anyone does not honor the Four Ecumenical Councils as he does the four evangelists, let him be anathema."* (Up to that time only four Ecumenical Councils had been convened.) All who heard him were frightened by these words, and none of the heretics dared to say anything contrary to them.

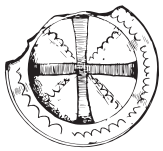
nineteenth century, and the Kholm Greek Catholic Church was the last to be dissolved in 1875. —S. M. K.

163 The following quotation is taken from Bishop Tikhon's first sermon after he was consecrated bishop of Lublin and is a good indication of his feeling about the duties and position of bishops: "In my youth, the office of a bishop seemed to me to be dignity, power, might, and honor. When I was a child I had childish conceptions. Now I know that it means work, striving, and sacrifice. It is not easy to be weak with those who are weak, nor is it easy to be an example to the faithful in word, in one's bearing, in love, faith, and chastity, and it certainly is not easy to admonish, to threaten and to punish in all patience. The life of a true bishop is daily dying in cares and concerns for others, therefore the success of the bishop's official activities depend not so much on human qualities and faculties, but much more on the power of God which is given to those who are conscious of their weakness" (Karl Rose, *Drei Patriarchen*, Berlin, c. 1950). In fact, neither the canons, nor the pre-revolutionary church legislation established any minimal age for the consecration of a bishop, except the canonical minimum of thirty years for a presbyteral ordination. The Council of 1917–1918 was the first to set the minimal age for episcopal consecration at thirty-five years.—Ed.

164 A vicar or auxiliary bishop is a bishop who assists the ruling bishop of a larger diocese or administers part of his diocese.

165 The Diocese of Alaska and the Aleutian Islands was created in 1870, with the bishop's residence at San Francisco.

166 His brother Mikhail, who accompanied him to North America and served as his secretary and the diocesan librarian, died on November 21, 1902, in San Francisco. St



The Russian-Orthodox Cathedral Of The Archangel Michael Of Sitka

II/ II

Russian Orthodox American Messenger, Vol. 3, No. 11, 1–13 June 1899, pp. 296–305

IV - The Chapel Of Our Lady Of Kazan

THE LEFT HAND chapel is consecrated in honor of the miraculous appearance of the ikon of Our Lady of Kazan.

The decoration is simple and tasteful. The Ikonostas or screen is tapestried with white canvas, which makes it like the walls of the Old Testament Tabernacle. It has three ikons, not counting those in the Royal Gates: the Last Supper, the Savior and the Mother of God. The latter is a pearl of Russian ecclesiastical art, which cannot but strike every lover of pure and holy art. The countenances of the Virgin and of the Holy Child are "sweeter than the radiance of stars" and the mildest light. It was a true artist's brush that produced this heavenly face of ineffable mildness The charm and novelty of this ecclesiastical type lies in its entire harmony with the reverential purity of true religious inspiration.

The Virgin and Child of C. Cignani, the Holy Family of P. Morando, the touching portrayals of Jesus' divine childhood by C. Dolci, the unspeakably ingenuous treatment of the same sacred subject by the immortal Murillo, the severe simplicity of Perugino, the various versions of the same theme under the bold brush of that great genius, Raphael Sanzio, from his Madonna della Sedia to that of San. Sisto—all these are immense and matchless creations, the pride and glory of the painter's craft; yet even after having admired and enjoyed those priceless gems, one will still be able to look on this modest product of Russian art with a serene and prayerful feeling, subdued by the loftiness of the Orthodox type, the concentrated force which lies in its very gentleness. The traveller in the distant land of waterfalls and cataracts will feel compelled to say, as he stands in the Kazan chapel of the Cathedral at Sitka: "Although the Sixtine Madonna stands supreme in the world of painting, still the Orthodox Madonna of Sitka has a divine beauty of her own."

In the same chapel there is an ikon of Our Lady of Sorrows which deserves respectful attention; the casing is of gilt silver studded with pearls. Another ikon, of Our Lady of Smolensk, is also noteworthy, both because of the excellent workmanship and because of the strange vicissitudes it passed through.

During an armed rising of the Indians, the savages broke into the church and began to destroy with hatchets, knives and shots, the objects of Christian worship. Our Lady of Smolensk, represented on the ikon as supported by two angels, manifested her heavenly power of intercession, but not until an Indian spear had inflicted a cruel wound on the sacred countenance, where it still shows in mute reproach, like the atoning wounds of Her Divine Son or the scar on the face of the ikon of Our Lady of Chenstochof.

Tikhon accompanied his brother's body back to Russia for burial in Toropets in 1903. —S. M. K.

167 It must be remembered that Tikhon was thrown into a completely new environment, including freedom of religion; no censorship; the hurrying, business-like American bustle; and above all a clash of Galician, Syrian, Bulgarian, Serbian, Greek, and Russian nationalities, which often must have drowned out the quiet voice of this man of God.

168 This sermon was given in December 1898, thus three years before his brother Mikhail's death. —S. M. K.

169 Rozhdestvensky, *His Holiness Tikhon*, says that Tikhon's mother died soon after he came to America but gives no date. Patriarch Tikhon's mother, Anna Gavrilovna Bellavina, passed away on April 29, 1904. In fact, she outlived three of her four sons. —Ed., S. M. K.

170 The newly established seminary had formerly been a mission school that Tikhon enlarged and changed to supply American priests for American churches and to make sure that the American churches would not depend on Russia for a constant supply of clergy. One of Tikhon's wishes was that all priests in America have American citizenship.

171 In February 1907, the first Orthodox Church Synod in America was held in Mayfield, New York. This had been organized by Tikhon, but just a month before it met, he was transferred to Yaroslavl'.

172 In 1891, the Slovak Greek Catholic priest Alexis Toth (Tovt), with his parish community in Minneapolis, was received into the Orthodox Church, becoming part of the Diocese of Alaska and Aleutian Islands. Under his influence, from 1891 to 1909 a number of Greek Catholic parish communities and

V - The Chapel Of The Precursor

On the right hand side of the church is situated a chapel dedicated in the names of St. John the Precursor. and the pious Prince Alexander Nevsky.

The size of the chapel is the same as that of the, Kazan chapel. Among the sacred images which it contains, the most noteworthy are an ikon of the Savior, the King of glory—in a gilt silver casing, and one of Our Lady of Vladimir, in a similar casing, with ornaments in precious stones. Both are of considerable value and fine workmanship.

On the right-hand wall of the chapel are an ikon of the Holy Trinity, and a painting representing some miraculous acts of healing performed by the Archangel Michael. The former ikon is very remarkable by its early Russian style of painting, which approaches nearly to the Byzantine, while the latter is of very ancient workmanship, reminding one of similar works in the great Moscow churches, especially in the early Russian Church of the Archangel.

VI - The Church Of The Annunciation

This church is situated in the house of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission. It is a bright, attractive church, like the generality of Orthodox churches in appearance and arrangement. It was built earlier than the Cathedral, in 1843, in the building which was the residence, first of Bishop Innocentius, then of his apostolic successors, later Russian bishops. The windows of the church command a magnificent view of the sea, the Sitka Archipelagus and the majestic circle of snow-clad mountains. At early morning services, worshippers can look on the radiance of a semi-polar dawn and a gorgeous sunrise—the symbol of that great historic day, the dawn of which was irradiated by prophecies and signs, and the full splendor of which was in the rising of that' Orient Sun which we call the Only-begotten Son of God descended to the earth.

In front of the main facade of the church, two mighty cedars lift their majestic peads, ever whispering their mysterious hreams to each other. They were planted by the same hand which planted thespiritual tree of Orthodoxy in the land—that of Bishop Innocentius.

There is in this church a magnificent ikon of the Last Supper, of considerable value, donated by Innocentius, besides several others of much merit, both in color and in the severity of the drawing, the work of some of the best masters of the art. The Testament which has its place upon the altar is remarkable as being the gift of the Russian State Chancelor, Roumiantsef, with an autograph dedication, in which the giver asks to remembered in the prayers of the faithful. Another noteworthy possession is a copy of the Ecclesiastical Statute, a specimen of ancient Slavic typographical art. Nor should the bishop's seat (behind the altar) be passed by: it is an exact reproduction of similar seats in the oldest historical churches.

VII - The Vestry And The Library

The vestments and sacred objects are not kept in any special place or room, but are scattered all over the church. The sets are to a great extent broken, as many single articles have been sent to various churches for temporary use. At present the attention of persons interested in the appurtenances of the Orthodox ritual may be directed to the following-items of the church's historical treasure:

Another Testament, of still larger size, silver-mounted, with ikons of the four evangelists in the four corners of the top cover, and one in the middle—an artistic rendering of the Resurrection, the central event of the Gospel narrative;

Another Testament, of still larger size, in a compact metallic binding, gilt by a fire process,—the gift of S. G. Kostromitinof and his family.

Besides the Testament and cross mentioned in § III there are several silver crosses of various designs and considerable artistic value, which remind one of the most splendid objects of the kind in the

thousands of former Uniates returned to the Orthodoxy. For his missionary labours, which were supported by the future patriarch Tikhon during his tenure in North America, Fr Alexis was glorified as a saint by the Orthodox Church in America in 1994. His relics reside at St Tikhon's Monastery in South Canaan, Pa. –Ed.

173 After Mikhail's death, St Tikhon submitted a request for a three-month leave in order to return to Russia (in part to bury Mikhail in Toropets). The leave was granted in March 1903 and he departed New York on May 15/28, 1903, arriving in Toropets at the end of May. Coming to St Petersburg in mid-June, St Tikhon was called to attend the sessions of the Holy Synod, which he did until the end of the year. After celebrating Christmas in Toropets, he departed for America, arriving in New York on January 3/16, 1904. —S. M. K.

174 Russian churches traditionally have the bell tower quite separate from the main part of the church, and this tower is often the proudest piece of architecture in the town, much like the Giotto tower in Florence.

175 There is a difference between Emhardt, *Religion in Soviet Russia* (London, 1929), and Ivan Andreyev, Краткій обзоръ исторіи Русской Церкви отъ революціи до нашихъ дней [A Short History of the Russian Church from the Revolution to Our Times] (Jordanville: Holy Trinity Monastery, 1952); because several of Emhardt's dates have proved wrong, I have used Andreyev's dates here. Archbishop Tikhon was transferred to Vilnius on December 22, 1913 and arrived in Vilnius on January 24, 1914. –Ed., S. M. K.

176 Vladimir L'vov's reference to the "will of God" when speaking of the revolution is

New York Museum, which owns a collection,, not large but select, of most characteristic specimens of beautiful Russian silversmith's work, the pride of this peaceable emporium of art.

Very fine is a sacred vessel, in memory of the "cup of thanksgiving" used at the Last Supper, of elegant shape and decorative workmanship remarkable for beauty of ornament, with the complete set of similar vessels used at the celebration of the Liturgy.

Another very splendid and costly vessel, of large size, used for the Eucharist, is of wonderful open work in the ornaments, and of the most artistic workmanship generally. The vessel once was stolen from the church, then returned, and now after being re-consecrated, is again in use at the celebration of the Sacrament.

Not less remarkable for beauty of workmanship and elegance of design is the tabernacle in which the Holy Gifts are kept; it is seen on the eastern side of the altar when the Royal Gates are open.

The censers, of pure silver and chaste Orthodox style, are also deserving of attention; the tinkling sound they produce when in use is particularly soft and pleasing, as they are swung in reverent homage to the sacred place, turning the worshippers' thoughts to the lifting of their spiritual being towards the radiant altitudes of the heavens.

The treasure of the Sitka Cathedral includes a Panagia or pectoral ikon, (the badge of the episcopal dignity) which was left at Sitka under somewhat mysterious circumstances. It is difficult to clear up a question still further obscured by the accumulation of years, but the Right Rev. Bishop Nicholas offers a brilliant conjecture on the subject, to the effect that this precious relic once belonged to the renowned Bishop Arsenius Matseyevitch. Of other regalia of the highest ecclesiastical dignity there are here a mitre of cloth of gold, with small ikons, a cross, and ornaments of various Siberian stones.

Another object deserving of attention is a vessel used at the Blessing of Loaves at the All-night Vigil services preceding high feast-days, when the Orthodox Church is accustomed to commemorate by the distribution of bread, the feeding of five thousand persons. This vessel is of pure silver, and so contrived that it holds specimens of the three principal products of the soil—bread, wine and oil, which the church consecrates for the sanctification not of these products alone, but also of those who partake of them.

There is no need of registering in catalogue order the other objects and vestments which form the mass of the church treasure, besides that such a work would require on the part of the reader a considerable preliminary knowledge of the Orthodox ritual. It is the cherished wish of the writer of these lines, with God's blessing, to publish for the American reading public popular but accurate description of the different objects, and acts which embody the early symbolism of the Orthodox Church: in such a work many things would find their proper place which would only encumber the present brief sketch, the object of which is to impart only a slight knowledge of the Orthodox Church generally and of the Cathedral of Sitka in particular. We will only add here that, when visiting the Cathedral, which is cordially and with God's blessing thrown open to the American public, the traveller can, if the rector himself be present, see all the objects described above, and receive on the spot all necessary information concerning them.

It would be desirable to view, if possible, the white Easter (or Paschal) vestments of cloth of silver, and those for high feast-days, of cloth of gold—the latter being the personal gift of the conqueror of Alaska, A. J. Baranof.

To obtain an adequate idea of the workmanship of such objects in Russia it were well to examine an Orarion (deacon's stole), of a cloth woven out of massive twisted silver threads, the heavy magnificence of which calls forth a sympathetic thought of those old-time men who delighted in decorating the temples of God.

A glance at the graded sizes and shapes of the eight bells which chime the scale, ranging in weight from 75 to 1500 pounds, and on the belfry clock, the work of Metropolitan Innocentius' own hands, will complete the friendly visitor's inspection of the blessed Cathedral of Sitka.

A visit to the church archive and library would hardly be of much interest or profit to any one unfamiliar with the Russian language. The archive contains exclusively papers of an official ecclesiastical character: there are neither historical documents, nor any unread manuscripts. Among the documents of a purely business nature there are some which bear the writing of Baranof and Bishop (later Metropolitan) Innocentius.

The library consists exclusively of Russian books of theological, religious-ethical and popularly didactic character, with the addition of a few publications of similar nature in the native dialects

most interesting in light of Tikhon's later speeches; Tikhon also saw the chaotic state of revolution and civil strife as the will of God brought on by the materialistic attitude and indifference of the Russian people to things of the spirit, as the real cause of the upheaval, rather than the work of political groups.

177 Bishop Joasaph had been appointed by the Synod to Moscow before the new ruling on elections had been made. Joasaph was appointed bishop of Dmitrovsk, one of the vicar bishops of the Moscow diocese, and temporary administrator of the diocese until a new metropolitan was elected. —S. M. K.

178 In a preliminary straw vote, Alexander D. Samarin, the former chief procurator of the Holy Synod in 1915, received most of the votes, and Tikhon was not even in the first rank of candidates. In fact, Samarin and Archbishop Tikhon received an equal share of votes in the first round of election for Metropolitan of Moscow. —Ed.

179 To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted; A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; A time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away; A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak; A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace. Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

180 The LORD killeth, and maketh alive: he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up. The LORD maketh

poor, and maketh rich: he bringeth low, and lifteth up. He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory: for the pillars of the earth are the LORD'S, and he hath set the world upon them. He will keep the feet of his saints, and the wicked shall be silent in darkness; for by strength shall no man prevail.
1 Samuel 2:6-9

181 Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you. Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.
1 Peter 5:6-9

182 Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.
Matthew 7:24-27

183 To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious:

of Alaska. The best and most valuable portion of the library is in the dwelling of the Rector of the Mission, where may be seen also a good selection of Russian literary works, some of which are very valuable as well in the capacity of scientific and bibliographical rarities, as from their being splendid and costly specimens of the book-maker's art, which has at present attained such high perfection in Russia.

In this group there are editions of his Imperial Highness the Grand Duke Alexander Mikhailovitch, his gift to the library, also gifts from modern Russian writers—Prince Ukhtomsky, General Bogdanovitch, Grigorovitch, Slutchefsky, Pypin, Mordov tsef, Potapenko and others.

VIII - The Mission And The Innocentius School

A TRAVELER VISITING Sitka under favorable conditions, should, after viewing the Cathedral, visit the building of the Russian Orthodox Mission. This can be done only after obtaining a permit from the Rector, by sending him a visiting card from the Cathedral. Besides the church of the Annunciation, described in § VI, and a few rare books which will attract book-lovers, the visitor will see here the few relics preserved and partly restored of the domestic surroundings of the first evangelizer of Alaska, the Metropolitan Innocentius.

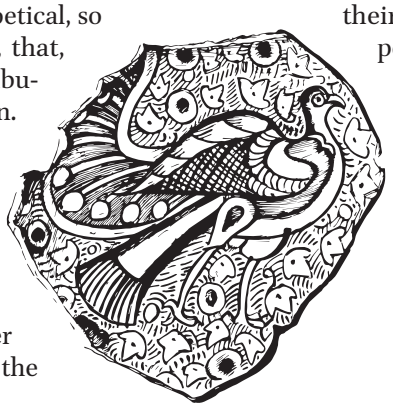
In the reception room of the Mission are preserved his clock and full set of furniture and mirrors; also a writing desk, made by his own hands, of such solid and lasting workmanship, as though it were established-upon a four armed-anchor. In the drawing room is the ikon he had in his cell—a gift of Princess Potemkin.

The visitor may, at the same time be granted access to the Russian school, where the course of studies is far more extensive than in American public schools. The furnishing of the school, its appearance and surroundings, are worthy of attention, and so is the written daily curriculum of studies, for the latter absolutely refutes the allegation, so insulting to Russian loyalty, concerning the alleged neglect of the English language, by showing that, in the Innocentius school of Sitka, twelve hours a week are devoted to its conscientious study, which is more than is apportioned to any other branch, because the school clearly comprehends the necessity of a national education and will never lose sight of what is due to young citizens of the United States.

IX - The Russian Orthodox Cemetery

THE RUSSIAN CEMETERY occupies the finest and most prominent locality in Sitka. From its highest point, where a small open square has been cleared, a wonderful view opens on the vide expanse of the Ocean and the blue Bosphor of Sitka, which has given the place its. name in the native dialect of the country.

In summer-time this spot is so poetical, so instinct with the spirit of elegy, that, but for the regularity in the distribution of the graves, it would be an. American reproductioh of that other beautiful spot—Scutari, which in another hemisphere, attracts admiring crowds from the great city which has "its bulwark in Asia and its bazar in Europe", in the words of an admirer and biographer of Byron, who, on the shores of the Propontis and at the foot of Leander's tragic tower, sought for memories of the great poet.



There are no historical tombs in this cemetery, nor any grandiloquent epitaphs. Crosses and gravemounds stand close together: the mortality is great among the Indians, in consequence of their sinful and ignorant disregard of all hygienic rules and their utter carelessness of their own persons.

In the eastern corner of the cemetery lie the mortal remains of Princess A. J. Maksutof, the wife of the chief manager of the Russian American Co. She died in the sixties.

X - Surroundings Of Sitka

THERE ARE NO other places of religious interest or monuments of the same kind. A mile or so from Sitka, beyond the small river Kalish, one pauses thoughtfully by the grave of the Russian seamen, treacherously done to death by the Indians, who resented the stern civil order enforced by the Russian Government. Old Sitka has a spot marked by similar bloody memories and on that spot the Cathedral Warden. S. J. Kostromitinof, has piously planted an Orthodox cross. Then there is the so-called"Lake Redout" (Ozernoy Redout)...

The traditions connected with these localities and the persons who once lent them life, are now almost entirely effaced. They are but a memory, vivid and clear only before the face of God.

I. Anthony.

January 22

The Orthodox Church possesses an inexhaustible treasury of proofs of life after death. One of the numerous proofs is cited here: an example that simultaneously witnesses that the souls of men live after physical death, and that voluntary obedience leads to blessed eternity. When **St. Theodosius the Great** founded a monastery, he had only seven monks in the beginning. In order to confirm in these monks the remembrance of death, he ordered them to dig a grave. When the grave was finished, **Theodosius** stood above the grave, surrounded by the seven monks, and said: *"Behold, my children, the grave is ready! Are there any among you who are ready for death, in order to be buried in this grave?"* One of them, **Basil** by name and a priest by rank, fell to his knees and sought a blessing from **Theodosius** to die. **Theodosius** ordered that a memorial service be held for the soul of **Basil** on the third, the ninth and the fortieth day, as is the custom for the deceased. When the fortieth memorial service was completed, **Basil**, in full health, laid down and died. He was buried in the new grave. On the fortieth day after his burial, **Basil** appeared among the brethren in the church in the morning, and chanted with them. In the beginning, only **Theodosius** saw him, and he prayed to God that He would open the eyes of the others. Then the entire brotherhood looked and saw **Basil** among them. One brother, Letius, joyfully spread his arms and wanted to embrace **Basil**—but the latter vanished, and **Letius** heard **Basil**'s voice saying: *"Save yourselves, fathers and brothers, save yourselves."*

and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed. **1 Peter 2:4-8**

184 For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame. For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God: But that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned. But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak. For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister. And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end: That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises. **Hebrews 6:4-12**

185 He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for

flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.
Matthew 16:15-19

186 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, I am the LORD your God. After the doings of the land of Egypt, wherein ye dwelt, shall ye not do: and after the doings of the land of Canaan, whither I bring you, shall ye not do: neither shall ye walk in their ordinances. Ye shall do my judgments, and keep mine ordinances, to walk therein: I am the LORD your God. Ye shall therefore keep my statutes, and my judgments: which if a man do, he shall live in them: I am the LORD. None of you shall approach to any that is near of kin to him, to uncover their nakedness: I am the LORD. The nakedness of thy father, or the nakedness of thy mother, shalt thou not uncover: she is thy mother; thou shalt not uncover her nakedness. The nakedness of thy father's wife shalt thou not uncover: it is thy father's nakedness. The nakedness of thy sister, the daughter of thy father, or daughter of thy mother, whether she be born at home, or born abroad, even their nakedness thou shalt not uncover. The nakedness of thy son's daughter, or of thy daughter's daughter, even their nakedness thou shalt not uncover: for theirs is thine own nakedness. The nakedness of thy father's wife's daughter, begotten of thy father, she is thy sister, thou shalt not uncover her nakedness. Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy father's sister: she is thy father's near kinswoman. Thou shalt not uncover

Most Rev. Metropolitan Innocentius, Formerly Archbishop Of Kamtchatka, Of The Kuril And Aleutian Islands

Instruction To The Missionary At Nushagak, Theophanus, Hieromonk

❦ II/ II ❦

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Part Second - Special Directions Concerning Instruction, Public Worship, The Treatment Of Natives, Etc.

III.

17. The dogmas of the faith and the substance of actual doctrine should be kept to so strictly as not to allow anything contrary to them in word or deed, though in the face of death itself. But some allowance should be made for new converts, as regards certain imperfections in the rites, partly in consideration of local conditions, partly in expectation of their growing firmer in the faith and the new mode of life.

18. The nature of those countries makes it almost impossible for the inhabitants to observe the fasts after the usual manner, i.e. by changing animal flesh diet to a wholly vegetable diet, *and their fasting can more conveniently modify not so much the quality as the. quantity of the food and the time of taking it.* Therefore they should not be compelled to observe the fasts by change of diet; but, in the first place, the object of the institution of fasts should be explained to them, and the good of it; then, as their conviction and zeal increase, they should be, led to observe the fasts on certain days in this manner: that they should, according to circumstances, diminish the quantity of the food they take, and not take that in the early hours of the day. As regards the Holy Week, and especially the last days before Easter Sunday, all converts should be urged to spend them in the utmost self-mortification, bodily and spiritual, in memory of the passion suffered by Jesus Christ for our salvation.

19. Attendance at ordinary services, with the exception of the Liturgy, should not be

made an absolute duty. Hence, in the course of thy travels in the remoter localities, when those whom thou dost visit are bound to confess and receive the Sacrament, thou must not make it absolutely incumbent on them to go to church during a whole week, as is customary with us, but only so much as circumstances will permit, and thou must be content with reminding and advising them that they should, during this time, pray to God as frequently as possible in their hearts for forgiveness of their sins, and also observe as strict a fast as they can. For such converts, instruction in the Word of God is always a better preparation for partaking of the Sacrament than reciting the usual Psalms and prayers, because none of them will, for a very long time yet, understand what is read and recited in church.

20. With regard to the celebration of marriages, departures from the strictness of existing rules can be permitted only for the most cogent reasons and in cases of extreme necessity; and in what these departures may consist, that shall be specified in special instructions which shall be given thee. In view of the scantiness of local populations, recalling the patriarchal times, it will not be advisable to extend overmuch the forbidden degrees of relationship. Still, the prohibitions recorded in this matter in Leviticus (ch. XVIII)[186], should be unswervingly kept in view.

21. Ancient customs, so long as they are not contrary to Christianity, need not be too abruptly broken up; but it should be explained to converts that they are merely tolerated.

22. Natives who have not received holy baptism, if only there is no reason to fear that they may in any way commit sacrilege or violate decorum, should not only not be forbidden from being present at our services,—such as vespers, matins, or Te Deums,—if they so wish, but should be invited to attend. As regards the Liturgy, it is against church rules to allow their presence at the *Liturgy of the Faithful*. Still, as the envoys of St. Vladimir in Constantinople were permitted, though they were heathens, to remain during the entire Liturgy, to the unspeakable benefit of all Russia,—thou also mayest grant the same favor, in the hope that the sacred act may have a salutary effect on hearts as yet un enlightened.

23. No matrimonial unions or contracts entered into before baptism must be considered as hindrances to the administration of the Sacrament; and no marriages contracted before baptism, (with the exception of such incestuous ones as can scarcely occur at all), must be annulled, nor must such marriages be inquired into.

24. Neophytes must be given no presents, either before, or at, or soon after baptism, nor must the sponsors be allowed to give them any, in order that the expectation of gifts may not serve as an inducement or suggest various cunning devices; therefore nothing must be given at baptism, neither shirts nor anything else, except the small crosses they are to wear.

25. Upon the holy Antimins given to thee thou art empowered to celebrate the Liturgy in any place whatever—in a clean dwelling or under the open sky. But for many reasons, it is preferable to have for the purpose a special tent, which should be pitched in places as clean as possible; and on such places the natives should be persuaded to erect, crosses, which may later on serve as landmarks, to show where the Bloodless Sacrifice has been offered, and also be a consecration to the place, so the people may assemble there tor common prayer in thy absence.

26. Thou art to take up thy residence more or less permanently where thou shalt judge thy presence to be most needed and useful. Happy indeed is the preacher, whose presence among them the natives regard as a privilege!

27. While shaping thy course of instruction after the order indicated above, be careful not to proceed to a new subject before the hearers—all or at least the majority—have well grasped the preceding ones, even though this may delay the baptism of many. The more firmly the foundation is laid, the more durable will be the building and the easier to erect it.

28. Thou shalt not bring in support of instruction in the faith and the Christian law any proofs not confirmed by Holy Writ, nor, still less, false miracles and invented revelations, under penalty of the severest censure. But, should the Lord in any place manifest His power, either by some miraculous cure or by some extraordinary revelation, thou shalt not conceal such divine manifestations, but, after instituting a proper and most impartial investigation, with all possible proofs, report the matter to us.

29. Thou shalt on no account attempt to increase the number of those who are to receive holy baptism by any measures or means inconsistent with the evangelical spirit and unbecoming a preacher,—such as compulsion, threats, bribes or promises (of exemption from taxes and

the nakedness of thy mother's sister: for she is thy mother's near kinswoman. Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy father's brother, thou shalt not approach to his wife: she is thine aunt. Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy daughter in law: she is thy son's wife; thou shalt not uncover her nakedness. Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy brother's wife: it is thy brother's nakedness. Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of a woman and her daughter, neither shalt thou take her son's daughter, or her daughter's daughter, to uncover her nakedness; for they are her near kinswomen: it is wickedness. Neither shalt thou take a wife to her sister, to vex her, to uncover her nakedness, beside the other in her life time. Also thou shalt not approach unto a woman to uncover her nakedness, as long as she is put apart for her uncleanness. Moreover thou shalt not lie carnally with thy neighbour's wife, to defile thyself with her. And thou shalt not let any of thy seed pass through the fire to Molech, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God: I am the LORD. Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination. Neither shalt thou lie with any beast to defile thyself therewith: neither shall any woman stand before a beast to lie down thereto: it is confusion. Defile not ye yourselves in any of these things: for in all these the nations are defiled which I cast out before you: And the land is defiled: therefore I do visit the iniquity thereof upon it, and the land itself vomiteth out her inhabitants. Ye shall therefore keep my statutes and my judgments, and shall not commit any of these abominations; neither any of your own nation, nor any stranger that sojourneth among you: (For all these abominations have the men of the land done, which were before you, and the land is defiled;) That the land spue not you out also, when ye defile it, as it spued out the nations that were

before you. For whosoever shall commit any of these abominations, even the souls that commit them shall be cut off from among their people. Therefore shall ye keep mine ordinance, that ye commit not any one of these abominable customs, which were committed before you, and that ye defile not yourselves therein: I am the LORD your God.
Leviticus 18

the like), nor by any vain allurements; but thou shalt always act with apostolic sincerity.

30. Thou shalt not proceed to administer holy baptism to natives before they have been thoroughly instructed by thee in the above-named matters, nor then, unless they shall have expressed the wish to receive it.

31. On arriving in some settlement of savages. thou shalt on no account say that thou art sent by any government, or give thyself out for some kind of official functionary, but appear in the guise of a poor wanderer, a sincere well-wisher to his fellow-men, who has come for the single purpose of showing them the means to attain prosperity and, as far as possible, guiding them in their quest.

32. From the moment when thou first enterest on thy duties, do thou strive, by conduct and by virtues becoming thy dignity, to win the good opinion and respect not alone of the natives, but of the civilized residents as well. Good opinion breeds respect, and one who is not respected will not be listened to.

33. On no account show open contempt for their manner of living, customs, etc., however these may appear deserving of it, for nothing insults and irritates savages so much as showing them open contempt and making fun of them and anything belonging to them.

34. From thy first interview with natives, do thy best to win their confidence and friendly regard, not by gifts or flattery, but by wise kindliness, by constant readiness to help in every way, by good and sensible advice and sincerity. For who will open his heart to thee, unless he trust thee?

35. In giving instruction and talking with natives generally, be gentle, pleasant, simple, and in no way assume an overbearing, didactic manner, for by so doing thou canst seriously jeopardize the success of thy labors.

36. When a native speaks to thee, hear him out attentively, courteously, and patiently, and answer questions convincingly, carefully and kindly; for any question asked by a native on spiritual subjects is a matter of great importance to the preacher, since it may be an indication both of the state of the questioner's soul and of his capacity, as well as of his desire, to learn. But by not answering him even only once, or answering in a way at which he can take offence, he may be silenced forever.

37. Those who show no wish to receive holy baptism, even after repeated persuasion, should not in any way be vexed. nor, especially, coerced: And although justice demands that converts and such as are ready to become converts should be treated with greater kindness and consideration, still thou, as preacher of the Gospel, should not be insulting in thy treatment of such as show no disposition to listen to instruction, but should be friendly in thy intercourse with them. This will be to them the best proof that thou dost really and truly wish them well.

38. Among some savage tribes in those parts polygamy is to be met with, but only among the rich and powerful. Therefore, while striving to incline them to monogamy, do thou proceed with caution and tact, never in a masterful spirit, but so as not to anger and embitter them.

39. From new converts or neophytes thou shalt not on any account whatsoever demand contributions or donations for the church or for any good work; yet shalt thou not refuse, but kindly accept gifts from such persons as may voluntarily offer anything,—taking care however, to explain on each separate occasion the object of the gift and the use it will be put to, in order that tey may not get the idea that God, like their own spirits, demands offerings, or that such gifts are expiatory or propitiatory sacrifices, and the like.

40. Henceforth, unless a special instruction be given thee, thou shalt take laborers or guides in thy travels from among the new converts or the natives of the places thou visitest. In this matter thou shouldst act in such a manner as not to lead them to fancy that, in becoming Christians, they at the same time become in some sort the slaves or bound laborers of their teachers. Hence, whenever such an occasion arises, thou shouldst request the natives' assistance in a friendly manner, and thou shouldst pay guides and all other help for their services.

41. On no account shalt thou require of new converts or any natives presents or contributions; *nor art thou to enter into any commercial transactions with them, either personally or through third parties*, under penalty of severest censure. Even what is needed for food thou shalt receive only in case of absolute necessity and against payment, or else what is offered spontaneously at the hospitable board.

42. Journeys are to be undertaken at seasonable times, i. e. when the inhabitants are comparatively at leisure from hunting and

fishing, so that, by undertaking a journey at an unseasonable time, thou mayest not interfere with the earnings of either the natives or the Company. But, should thou find it impossible to visit some locality to the greatest possible advantage at any other time than the working season, thou shalt report the matter in good time to us, explaining all the reasons for and possible consequences of the one or the other course.

43. In order to be of the greatest possible service to thy parishioners, thou shouldst quickly learn at least so much of their language as will enable thee to understand them. But the acolyte who is with thee as thy assistant must regard it as his bounden duty to study the language thoroughly, and thou art to see that he does.

44. Make it thy business to find out all about the religion, rites, customs, tastes, disposition, and all that makes up the life of thy parishioners, more especially in order to be able the more surely and easily to influence them.

Note. It imports not a little for thy success that thou shouldst do justice to any good customs they may have.

45. During thy visits and residence in that or the other locality, give the natives, as far as time will permit, advice and directions for the improvement of their manner of living, avoiding, however, anything like coercion, and taking care not to give offence in any way, all in a friendly, open-hearted spirit; and the advice and directions should be adapted to the local conditions and the simplicity of their manners.

46. Do not meddle with any temporal affairs, and do not, either openly or by secret insinuation, discredit in their eyes any of the authorities placed over them either by the government or by their own choice; for Jesus Christ Himself, while He dwelt on earth, insulted no existing powers and touched nobody's rights of property. But should the actions of an official and his treatment of the natives be too cruel and unbearable, exhort him at first in all gentleness and friendliness; then, should this prove inefficient, report the matter confidentially to us, with every detail and in all fairness or, in case of our absence, to the dean of the district, who will bring it before the higher authority.

47. In all matters exceeding thy powers, thou shalt apply to us, and of any scruples or misunderstandings that may arise, thou shalt write to us, officially or confidentially, according to circumstances.

48. Judging from the gentle temper of many of the natives of the American coastland, it would seem that, if thy conduct be peaceable and such as beseems a preacher of the Gospel, no attacks or attempts against life are to be expected. Yet, should thy life, against all expectation, be in any way endangered, thou shouldst have recourse to the last and decisive measures for thy defence only in a case of absolute extremity. But a hundred times blessed shalt thou be if thou be found worthy to suffer for the name of Jesus Christ.

49. That thy labors, acts, and progress in the work entrusted to thee may be the better seen and thy services the more correctly appreciated, thou shalt keep a diary, in which thou shalt set down all thy acts, all the principal thoughts and words that shall have occurred in thy talks with the savages, and everything noteworthy generally. This diary thou shalt submit to us each year, together with thy other reports.

50. Concerning the order in which the church matters are to be held' such as the keeping of the books, of various registers, and the forms to be observed in both, special instructions shall be given thee.

51. Wherever possible or convenient, try to start a primary school for the instruction of children in the Catechism, reading, etc., after the model of those which are ordered by imperial decree to be organized in monasteries and in connection with churches. Should it not be possible to organize schools on these principles, then at least assemble in thy own dwelling or in the chapel, once or twice a week, the children of both sexes, first those of resident Russians and halfbreeds, then those of new converts; instruct them in their duties to God, their parents, the authorities, to each other and to their neighbors. Thou mayest employ thy acolytes to assist thee in teaching the children to read and write.

52. It goes without saying that thou art, in addition to all the above rules, to fulfil strictly and faithfully the general and particular rules concerning churches and the persons attached, to them conformably to local conditions and institutions, and all such directions as shall be given thee from time to time, and also all the regulations and ordinances of any kind whatever, issued by the local authorities for the general community,—and, by thus fulfilling them, thou shalt give a good example.

Bear in mind that thou art in a position where it is possible for thee' to receive greater rewards, and more promptly, than do many others,—rewards both heavenly, in the future, and temporal, in the present The heavenly rewards are in the hands of the Great Distributor of meeds, Who will constantly behold thee and thy actions thy intentions, and the spirit in which thou wilt act. As regards temporal rewards, of this earth notice shall be taken of the number of converts thou shalt have made; but still more of the zeal and ardor thou shalt bring to thy labors,—of any translation thou mayest make of portions from books of the Scriptures into the language of thy parishioners,— of thy efforts to teach them to read the portions thus translated; and if thou succeedest with at least fifty pupils, this shall co considered us sufficient proof of thy zeal, and as a merit deserving of the highest rewards open to the clergy.

Do thou strive to stand before God, a laborer unashamed, righteously administering the Word of Truth. Devote thyself to thy teaching and abide therein,—and by thus doing, shalt thou eave both thyself and them that listen to thee.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit.

Signed on the original:

Innocentius, Archbishop of Kamtchatka, of the Kuril and Aleutian Islands.

January 21

The Christian Faith is the only Faith in the world that has one determined and never-changing standard of values. **St. John Chrysostom** speaks clearly about how it measures and classifies its values. He says: *"Things are divided into three categories: The first are good and cannot be evil—for example, wisdom, charity and the like. The second are evil and can never be good—for example, perversion, inhumanity and cruelty. The third, at times, become one or, at times, become the other, according to the disposition of those who make use of them."* This divine teacher explains that riches and poverty, freedom and slavery, power, disease, and even death itself fall into the third category. They are neither good nor evil by themselves, but become either one or the other, according to the disposition of men and the use that men make of them. For example, if riches were good and poverty evil, then all rich men would be good and all the poor would be evil. However, we are daily convinced that, as there are good and evil rich men, so also are there good and evil poor men. The same can be applied to the healthy and the sick, the free and the enslaved, the satiated and the hungry, and those in authority and those under subjugation. Even death is not evil, for *"the martyrs, through death, became more fortunate than all others."*

Hermogen, Bishop Of Pskof And Porkhof

On The Holy Sacraments Of The Orthodox Church

Translated From The Russian By Zenaide A. Ragozin

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II

Baptism

General Notions On Baptism

Baptism ranks first among the seven Sacraments, not because it is higher than the others—the Eucharist stands higher—but because it is the first and only way which gives access to the other sacraments, since it alone entitles a person to take the; name of Christian, and it is Christians only for whose benefit the Sacraments exist. Baptism is, so to speak, the entrance gate to Christ's Church.

What, then, is Baptism? It is a sacrament by which a man, through the threefold immersion of the body into consecrated water, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, dies to the life of sin and the flesh, and is born anew into the life of the spirit. It therefore includes two acts—*death and birth*.

What is it then, that dies and is consigned to the grave?

If it is an infant who is baptized, what dies in him and is consigned to the grave is that original sin which he inherited from his first parents, Adam and Eve; if an adult, then what dies in him through Baptism and is consigned to the grave is not only the original sin, but all his own personal sins committed before baptism. After baptism man is free from eternal punishment not only for that original sin, but also for his own personal sins committed before baptism.

And what is *born* in him?

A new spiritual life, pure, innocent, the life which Adam and Eve lived in Eden before the fall. This is why Baptism is sometimes spoken of in Scripture as the "*washing of regeneration*" [Tit. 3:5][187]. From the moment of baptism, those present hear with their believing hearts that same voice of God the Father, which was heard from the openen heavens at the baptism of the Son of God: "*This is my beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased*" [Matth.

187 But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.
Titus 3:4-7

188 And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.
Matthew 3:16-17

189 He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.
John 1:11-14

190 Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him,

that we may be also glorified together. Romans 8:12-17

191 Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn. Matthew 13:24-30

192 Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you. Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world. 1 Peter 5:6-9

193 The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God; As it is written in the prophets, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. And there went

3:17][188], for he who has just been baptized becomes the child of God and receives the right of calling on Him as on a Father [John 1:12-13[189]; Rom. 8:14-15[190]].

The question is sometimes asked, "If the original sin is the root and beginning of all our own personal sins, so that, were not that root of sin in us, neither would there be the offshoots therefrom, i. e. our own personal sins,—and if baptism really extirpates that original sin, root and branch, —if all this is so, why do people go on sinning after baptism? If we pull out of the soil with its roots any noxious weed, that weed will not appear again on the surface of the soil, after it has been cleared, will it?"... What answer can be given to such a question? This, to begin with: through Baptism we become as pure and innocent as Adam and Eve were in Eden before the fall. But Adam and Eve, if they were sinless in Eden before the fall, still were capable of sinning, otherwise they would not have sinned. This is why, even after Baptism has extirpated from our hearts the original sin, there still remains in us, as there was in Adam and Eve in their state of innocence, the ability to sin, and therefore, naturally, we sin. In the second place, I would direct your attention to Christ's parable of the wheat and tares (Matth. 13:24-30)[191]. A householder cleared his field, dressed and ploughed it, and sowed in it good seed; yet, to the servant's amazement, tares appeared amid the wheat. But the soil had nothing to do with that. The tares came up because an enemy came at the dead of night, when the servants were asleep, and sowed the tares amidst the wheat, and went his way. In the same manner, cannot the Evil One, our wicked, envious enemy, sow tares in the field of our soul, cleared and dressed, though it be, taking advantage of our heedlessness? Are we not told that he "*walketh about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour?*" [1 Peter 5:8][192]. Lastly, even setting aside the enemy, there may be other reasons why tares can appear in our field, though it was cleared and dressed, as for instance: a bird may be flying over your field and drop the seed of some noxious weed, which it held in its bill; or—the wind may blow on to your cherished field a noxious weed or some evil seeds, and lo! tares grow up amidst the wheat. The same things may happen to our souls, though they were purified by Baptism: there are enough noxious seeds, and evil winds, aud evil birds, ready to do the evil work!

The Institution Of The Sacrament Of Baptism

THREE EVENTS ARE mentioned in Scripture, which appear to indicate the origin of Christian baptism. They are the following: a) *St. John, the Precursor* (Foreruner) *of the Lord*, baptized the Jews in the River Jordan [Mark 1:4-5][193].—b) *Jesus Christ Himself* received baptism from John in the Jordan [Matth. 3:13, 17][194].—c) *Jesus Christ commanded the Apostles to baptize, saying to them: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost"* [Matth. 28:18-19][195]. But all these events took place not simultaneously, but at different times, some sooner, some later. Which of them ought we to consider as the real origin of the Christian sacrament, while each of them evidently bears a close relation to it?

a) Baptism as administered by John was merely a preparation of men for Christian baptism, and served as a prototype of it, but was not yet the real Christian Baptism.

b) The Baptism of Jesus Christ by John is undoubtedly the most nearly related to our Christian Baptism; still it cannot properly be considered as the origin and beginning of it; in the first place because it was John who baptized Him, and John's baptism as has just been seen, was not yet Christian Baptism; and in the second place because Christ, the sinless Son of God, had no need either of repentance, to which John's baptism disposed his hearers, or of the

Christian Baptism, which, as we likewise have seen, extirpates both the original sin and a man's own personal sins, committed before baptism.

c) We shall then have to recognize as the origin and beginning of Christian Baptism these words of Christ: *"All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name, of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost"* [Matth. 28:18-19]. From this precise moment the Apostles, and their successors after them, began to baptize men not as John did, "unto repentance", but in Christ's spirit, "unto the remission of sins". Of the necessity of such baptism mention is made many times—for instance: "*Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God*" [John 3:5][196]: or "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" [Mark 16:16][197]

I shall now speak: 1] of *the places* where baptism must be performed; 2] of *the age* at which a person may be baptized; and 3] of *the ceremonies* which compose the rite of baptism.

The Places Where Baptism May Be Performed

Originally baptism took place either under the open sky—in rivers, lakes, ponds, springs,—or in houses. This was the case especially in the times of persecution by Jews or heathens; is also took place under the open sky in times of peace, when whole multitudes were baptized at one time. But after the persecutions had ceased, it became customary to perform the rite preferably in churches, barring very exceptional occasions. Rulings 31 and 59 of the Sixth Ecumenic Council prescribe this, and allow baptism to be performed in private homes only in cases of extreme urgency, and then with the proviso that a clean room be set aside for the act. In ancient times a special place was constructed or set apart for the purpose—the so-called *baptisterium*—either in or near a church. If within the church,—or more correctly in a side chapel—a font was set apart with water and steps leading down into it; this was called a "great baptisterium," to distinguish it from the "small baptisterium", which was merely a large basin containing holy water. To this day there are churches in Serbia where a font, of metal or stone, stands in a corner, and by its side a small table, on which lie the register and a receptacle in the form of a little pillar, for the hair which is cut from the infants' heads during the rite. In Russia baptism may be performed at home not only on account of an infant's weak condition, but also when the parents' residence is too far removed from the parish church. At one time the question was moved, whether baptism might be performed in private chapels or house churches. Some councils—for instance the Sixth (VIIth century), in its 31st ruling—and the Emperor Leo the Philosopher, authorized baptisms in private chapels. But the Patriarch of Constantinople Alexius (XIth century), probably in consequence of some abuses, forbade them, and was followed by our own Metropolitan Georgius of Kief (1072—79). At the present time the matter is left to the discretion of each diocesan bishop.

According to the doctrine of the Orthodox Church, may be baptized: *infants*, born of Christian parents, and *adults*, not Christians, who wish to become Christians. This doctrine is soundly and firmly based upon Scripture and sacred traditions. From Scripture, for instance, we know that Christ said to the Apostles: "*Go ye, and teach all nations, baptizing them*"[198], without specifying the age at which they should baptize people, that is to say, at any age. We know that He, Christ, Himself said to the Apostles: "*Suffer little children, and forbid them not to come to me; for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven*" [Matth. 19:14][199]: and these were also His own words: "*Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God*"[200]; no exception is made in favor of an infant who has died without baptism, uncleansed of the original sin. We know that the Apostles sometimes baptized entire families, and families must have included children and infants. We find the same thing in the Holy Fathers of the Church. Thus, for instance, St. Cyprian (III-d century), says: "If no one is forbidden from baptism, how much less a newborn babe, who has as yet committed no sin, and has none but the original sin?" Again, St. Gregory the Divine (IV-th century), writes: "Hast thou a babe?.. Give not the taint in him time to grow strong. Let him be sanctified in infancy (by baptism)". The Councils confirm the same advice by their rulings—such as rulings 83 and 124 of Council of Carthage, and 84 of the Sixth Ecumenic Council. At Athens a newborn babe, until a Christian name has been given to it at baptism, is not called by the usual childish appellation of *nepion* or *paidion*; but a boy is called *drakos*, and a girl *drakoula*—"serpent", because, until baptism, the original sin lurks in them, which was committed in Eden by our first parents at the instigation of the perfidious *serpent*—the Devil. The Little-Russians who live in the government of Tauris (Crimea), have a custom of keeping candles or

out unto him all the land of Judaea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins.
Mark 1:1-5

194 I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire: Whose fan is in his hand, and he will throughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire. Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.
Matthew 3:11-17

195 Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted. And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.
Matthew 28:16-20

196 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot

enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.
John 3:5-6

197 And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.
Mark 16:15-18

198 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.
Matthew 28 :18-20

199 Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should put his hands on them, and pray: and the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven. And he laid his hands on them, and departed thence.
Matthew 19:13-15

200 Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.
John 3:4-5

201 And when he was come in, he saith unto them, Why make ye this ado, and weep? the damsel is not dead, but sleepeth. And

lampads burning before the ikons night and day from an infant's birth until baptism, that the Evil Powers may not change the child or in any way touch it. It is said that people there are always in a great hurry to baptize the child, to save the expense of the candles or oil. However that may be, the majority of Christians,—not the Orthodox alone, but those of other confessions also,—generally baptize in childhood or infancy; the only difference of opinion is on the exact age at which children ought to be baptized. In the church of Carthage it was customary to perform the rite on the 8-th day after birth. In Greece and Rome the child was usually named on the 8-th day and baptized on the 40-th, the rule being to perform the rite before Mass, so that the child might be given communion immediately, for which reason the priest and sponsors come to the ceremony without having touched food.

By the way—a word about this name of "sponsors". The Russian name means literally "receivers, takers-up", and is translated from the Greek "*anadochos*"; in familiar Greek speech a godfather is called "*koumparos*". Does not the familiar Russian "*koum*" come from that? Or, it may be, from the Aramean word, "koumi", which means "stand up!" because the sponsors, "take their stand" before the font in the neophyte's place. The Aramean language was known in Palestine in the Apostles' time (see Mark 5:41)[201]. However that may be, sponsors have been known in the Church of Christ from remotest antiquity. They are mentioned in the so-called "Apostolic Rulings", which are accepted for guidance by the church (see Ruling 2 of the Vl-th Ecumenic Council; there are 85 in all.) They are referred to in the so-called "Apostolic Ordinances" (see Book III, ch. 16). They are mentioned in the Fathers and ancient writers, such as St. Dionysius the Areopagite ("Ecclesiastical Hierarchy", ch. 2), Tertullian ("On Baptism", ch. 18). According to our laws, the following persons can not be sponsors: 1) children (it is ordained by the decrees of the Holy Synod of 1836-7 that a godfather must not be younger than 15, or a godmother than 13), because they are not yet capable of pledging themselves for the neophyte's faith, and do not themselves as yet know the Orthodox faith; 2) immoral and insane persons: the former because their mode of life disqualifies them for the honor; the latter because their mental condition incapacitates them from either pledging themselves for the neophyte's faith or giving religious instruction; 3) persons of non-Orthodox confessions when the neophyte is Orthodox—for obvious reasons; 4) parents cannot stand sponsors for their own children. These rules, as well known, are not always strictly adhered to with us—except the last: parents never stand sponsors for their own children. But even in ancient times the rules were occasionally relaxed, from necessity. Thus, for instance, the Indian prince St. Josaphus stood sponsor for his own father, Avenirus (19-th of November). It is not customary with us for persons of the monastic order to act as sponsors; yet who would seem fitter for the duty than monks and nuns? From the point of view of sponsorship, it is so; but the monastic point of view is different. Sponsors are the most intimate guides and teachers of their godchildren in the faith and in life. The monk is specially fit for these lofty duties: he knows the doctrine; his life is, as a rule, on a higher plane than the layman's. But, on the other hand, his position makes it difficult for him to reconcile his monastic duties with those of an instructor. To teach his godchildren, he would have either to receive them in his own cell-which, in that case, would be transformed into a sort, of secular schoolroom or to go to their houses. This is contrary to the monastic rule, and besides, he might become fond of secular life. Nevertheless, history records not a few cases of children taken from the baptismal font by monks. Thus Potamion, Bishop of Agrigentum, was godfather to the infant Gregory, later himself a bishop (VII-th cent.), commemorated on the 23 of November). Germanus, Patriarch of Constantinople (VIII-th cent.), was godfather to the infant Stephen, who became known under the name of the Venerable Martyr Stephen the Younger (28th of November). The Venerable Daniel of Pereyaslavl (died 1540), was godfather to the children of the Grand Duke (*Veliki Kniaz*) Vassili Vassilevitch. In fact several of our Patriarchs, Metropolitans, archbishops and bishops have been godfathers to the children of Tsars and princes. In Greece and in our own country, Russia, the Metropolitans Cyprian (1305) and Photius (1410), ruled that a boy could do with only a godfather and a girl with only a godmother. Sponsorship produces spiritual kinship; however it affects only the sponsors, the godchildren and their parents; it does not extend to all their relatives, like kinship of the flesh, and its only effect is to disqualify sponsors from marrying godchild or a godchild's father or mother, or each other. In former times sponsors, in Russia, enjoyed particular respect in the families of their godchildren, and much of the feeling still survives among the common people—very properly, since it is written "honor thy father..." Among the Bulgars, the person who has been invited to stand godfather to the first child is accorded a sort of prescriptive right to stand in the same relation to all the children successively, so that to change the "gossip" without some particularly cogent reason, is a very serious insult to the first gossip.

Bishop Ignatius Briantchaninov

On Prayer

Orthodox Life, No. 2, March-April 1968, pp. 12-24

Part I

It is natural for the poor man to beg, and it is natural for man made poor by the fall into sin to pray.

Prayer is the appeal of fallen and repenting man to God. Prayer is the weeping of fallen and repenting man before God. Prayer is the outpouring before God of the heart-felt wishes, requests, sighs of man fallen and slain by sin.

The first manifestation, the first movement of repentance is weeping of the heart. This is the prayerful voice of the heart, anticipating prayer of the mind. And soon the mind, taken up in the prayer of the heart, begins to give birth to prayerful thoughts.

God is the only source of all true good. Prayer is the mother and head of all virtues[202], as the means and fortune of man's communion with God. It adopts virtues from the source of good—God,—makes them part of the man who by prayer strives to dwell in communion with God.

The way to God is prayer. The measurements of the journey traveled are the various states of prayer which the person praying correctly and constantly gradually enters into.

Learn to pray to God correctly. Having learned to pray correctly, pray constantly,—and you will comfortably inherit salvation. Salvation appears from God in its own time, making itself known irrefutably to him who prays correctly and constantly.

For prayer to be correct, it must be offered from a heart filled with poverty of spirit, from a contrite and humble heart. As for all other states of the heart, consider them, until the heart's renewal by the Holy Spirit,—and this is exactly what they are—unnatural for the repenting sinner begging God for forgiveness of his sins and for liberation from enslavement to the passions—as from a prison and bonds.

It was prescribed by the Law of Moses for the Israelites to offer all their sacrifices in only one place, designated by God. And by the spiritual law there is designated for Christians one spiritual place for the offering of all their sacrifices, and in particular the sacrifice of sacrifices—prayers. This place is humility.

God does not need our prayers! He knows what we need beforehand—our request, what we have need of; He, the Most Compassionate, pours out abundant mercies also on those who do not ask them of Him. It is fur us that prayer is indispensable; it makes man part of God. Without it man is alien to God; but the more he exercises in prayer, the more he draws near to God.

Prayer is the communion of life. Abandoning it brings unseen death to the soul.

they laughed him to scorn. But when he had put them all out, he taketh the father and the mother of the damsel, and them that were with him, and entereth in where the damsel was lying. And he took the damsel by the hand, and said unto her, Talitha cumi; which is, being interpreted, Damsel, I say unto thee, arise. And straightway the damsel arose, and walked; for she was of the age of twelve years. And they were astonished with a great astonishment. And he charged them straitly that no man should know it; and commanded that something should be given her to eat.
Mark 5:39-43

202 The Ladder, Title of Step 28. St. Macarius of Egypt, Word 3, Chapter 1.

What air is for the life of the body, the Holy Spirit is for the life of the soul. By means of prayer, the soul breathes this holy, mysterious air.

When you arise from sleep, let your first thought be of God; offer to God the very beginning of your thoughts, still unmarked by any vain impression. When you go to sleep, when you prepare to sink into this image of death, let your last thoughts be of eternity and of God Who reigns therein.

An angel revealed to a certain holy monk the following order of thoughts in prayer which is pleasing to God. "The beginning of prayer should consist of praise of God, of thanksgiving to God for His numberless benefits; then we should offer to God the sincere confession of our sins, in contrition of spirit; in conclusion we can include, though with great humility, requests to the Lord for our spiritual and bodily needs, reverently leaving the fulfilment or nonfulfillment of these requests to His will"[203].

The initial cause for prayer is faith; **I believed, therefore have I spoken**[204] by my prayer to the compassionate God, Who deigned to give me the commandment of prayer and Who gave the promise to attend to it.

What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them, the Lord promised[205]. And therefore, having rejected every doubt and duplicity of spirit, persistently dwell by prayer before the Lord, Who commanded **always to pray and not to faint**[206], that is, not to pass into despair at the narrowness of prayer, which, especially at the beginning, is burdensome, unbearable for the mind accustomed to wandering every which way.

Blessed is the soul which by prayer incessantly knocks at the door of God's compassion, and by complaints against its **brother** (Luke 18:3)—against sin which violates it—incessantly wearies the Indefatigable[207]; in its own time it will rejoice over its purity and over its passionlessness.

God does not need our prayers! He knows what we need even before we ask it. He, the All-Merciful, gives bountiful gifts even to those who do not ask for them. We need prayer—it unites us with God. Without it, a person is unknown by God, while the more he becomes adept at prayer, the closer he comes to God.

Prayer is communion of life itself. Leaving it brings unseen death to the soul.

What air is for the life of the body, the Holy Spirit is for the life of the soul. The soul breathes this holy, mystical air through prayer.

When you rise from sleep, let your first thought be of God. Bring to God the very beginning of your thoughts before they have been spoiled by any worldly impressions. When you lie down to sleep, when you ready yourself to descend into this image of death, let your last thoughts be of eternity and God who rules over eternity.

An angel once revealed to a holy monk the following proper progression of thoughts in God-pleasing prayer: "The beginning of prayer should consist of praise for God coming out of gratitude for his countless gifts; then we must bring to God a sincere confession of our sins, with pain of heart, and only in conclusion can we bring, and only with the greatest humility, our petitions to the Lord for the needs of our soul and body, leaving the fulfillment of these petitions completely to His will."[208]

The first reason for prayer is faith: "I believed, so I spake"[209] with my prayer to the merciful God, who in His goodness commanded me to pray and gave His promise to hear my prayer.

"Whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them," said the Lord.[210] And thus, having rejected all doubts and duplicity of heart, let us constantly immerse ourselves in prayer before God, who commanded "always … to pray, and not lose heart;"[211] that is, never to fall into despair because of the difficulty of our prayer, as at first it is heavy and unwieldy for the mind, which has become accustomed to freely wander wherever it wills.

Blessed is the soul that through prayer constantly knocks at the doors of God's mercy, and through complaints against the "adversary,"[212] that is, sin, constantly tires the Tireless One[213]. Such a soul will rejoice in the appointed time because of its purity and dispassion.

Sometimes our petitions are heard immediately; sometimes, according to the words of our Saviour, "Shall God not avenge His own elect which cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them?"[214] In other words, He fulfills our petitions after some delay. He sees that we need some time to be confirmed in our humility, that we need to become tired and to see our sickness, which always reveals itself very unexpectedly when we are faced with ourselves.

203 The Ladder, Step 28, 7

204 The LORD preserveth the simple: I was brought low, and he helped me. Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the LORD hath dealt bountifully with thee. For thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling. will walk before the LORD in the land of the living. I believed, therefore have I spoken: I was greatly afflicted: said in my haste, All men are liars. What shall I render unto the LORD for all his benefits toward me? I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the LORD. Psalm 116 6–13

205 And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God. For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith. Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them. And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses. Mark 11 22–26

206 And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint; Saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man: And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me. And

Prayer, as conversing with God, of itself is a lofty good, often far greater than that for which a person is praying. The compassionate God, by not fulfilling the petitions, leaves the petitioner in his prayer so that he might not lose it, might not leave this higher good when he receives the good requested which is far smaller.

God does not satisfy requests whose fulfillment is attended by harmful results; He also does not satisfy those requests which are contrary to His holy will, contrary to His all-wise, incomprehensible providence.

Contrary to God's determination, the great Moses, Beholder of God, asked that he be granted to enter into the promised land, and he was not heard (Deut. 3:26); holy David prayed, intensifying his prayer with fasting, ashes, and tears, for the preservation of the life of his ailing son; but he was not heard (Il Kings12). And you, when your petition is not fulfilled by God, reverently submit to the will of the all-holy God, Who, for unknowable reasons, left your petition unfulfilled.

The holy Apostle James proclaims to the sons of the world who ask worldly benefits for satisfying carnal desires: **Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.**[215]

When we wish to stand before an earthly king, we prepare for this with special diligence; we learn what the mood of our heart's feelings should be during the conversation with him, so as not to be carried away at some whim to a word or movement displeasing to the king; in good time we think out what to say to him, so as to say only what is pleasing, and by this to dispose him favorably to ourselves; we take care that our very outward appearance might attract attention to us. Even more should we make proper preparations when we wish to stand before the King of kings and to enter by prayer into conversation with Him.

Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart[216]; but in man the disposition of the heart is in conformity to his exterior stance and outward appearance. And therefore in prayer give the most reverent stance to the body. Stand as one condemned, with head bowed, not daring to look up to heaven, with hands at your side or clasped behind you as if bound by ropes, as criminals seized on the site of the crime are usually bound. Let the sound of your voice be the pitiful sound of weeping, the groan of one wounded by a fatal weapon or in agony from a terrible disease.

The Lord looketh on the heart. He sees our most secret, our most subtle thoughts and feelings; He sees all our past and future. God is omnipresent. And therefore stand at your prayer as if you stood before God Himself. In fact you are standing before Him! you are standing before your Judge and sovereign Master upon Whom your fate depends in time and in eternity. Make use of your standing before Him for the arrangement of your well-being; do not allow this standing to serve, because of its unworthiness, as a cause of temporal and eternal punishment for you.

Intending to offer prayer to God, reject all earthly thoughts and cares. Do not occupy yourself with the thoughts which come to you then, however important, brilliant, or needful they might seem. Render what is God's to God, and you will succeed in rendering what is needed for temporal life in its own time. It is impossible at one and the same time to work for God in prayer and to occupy your mind with extraneous thoughts and cares.

Before prayer cense in your heart with the thyme of fear of God and holy reverence; meditate on how you angered God by countless sins, which are more evident to Him than to your own conscience; strive to mitigate the Judge by humility. Be careful! do not arouse His indignation by carelessness and boldness; He wills that even the purest angelic Powers closest to Him stand before Him with all reverence and holiest fear.[217]

The garment of your soul must shine with the whiteness of simplicity. Here there must be nothing complex! there must not be evil thoughts mixed in and feelings of vainglory, hypocrisy, affectation, seeking to please men, highmindedness, passionateness—these dark and stinking blemishes which blot the spiritual garments of the pharisees at prayer.

In place of pearls and diamonds, in place of gold and silver, beautify yourself with chastity, humility, tears of meekness and spiritual reason, and before you receive these tears, with tears of repentance; beautify yourself with infantile, angelic benignancy; these are priceless furnishings! When the King of kings secs these furnishings in your soul, His merciful glances will be inclined to the soul.

The forgiveness of all, all insults without exception, even the deepest ones, is an indespensible condition for succeeding in prayer. **And when ye stand praying, the Saviour commands forgive, if ye have ought against any, that your Father also Which is in heaven forgive your trespasses. But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father**

the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith. And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth? And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.
Luke 18 1–14

207 *The Ladder*, Step 7, 11

208 *The Ladder*, Step 28. ch. 7

209 **Psalm 116 1**

210 **Mark 11 24**

211 **Luke 18 1**

212 **Luke 18 3**

213 *The Ladder*, Step 7. ch. 11.

214 **Luke 18 7**

215 From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members? Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts. Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of

the world is the enemy of God. Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy? But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.
James 14 1–7

216 And Samuel did that which the LORD spake, and came to Bethlehem. And the elders of the town trembled at his coming, and said, Comest thou peaceably? And he said, Peaceably: I am come to sacrifice unto the LORD: sanctify yourselves, and come with me to the sacrifice. And he sanctified Jesse and his sons, and called them to the sacrifice. And it came to pass, when they were come, that he looked on Eliab, and said, Surely the LORD'S anointed is before him. But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.
I Samuel 16 4–7

217 Ps. 88

218 And in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots. And Peter calling to remembrance saith unto him, Master, behold, the fig tree which thou cursedst is withered away. And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God. For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith. Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them. And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven

Which is in heaven forgive your trespasses[218]. "The prayers of those who hold grudges is sowing on stone," said St. Isaac the Syrian[219].

Measured, reasonable, constant temperance in food and drink makes the body light, cleans the mind, grants it wakefulness, and therefore likewise serves as a preparation for prayer. In temperance for the belly makes the body heavy, plump, hardens the heart, darkens the mind with a multitude of steams and gasses rising from the stomach to the brain. The overstuffed or sated scarcely stands for prayer, when sleepiness and laziness attack him; a multitude of crude fantasies depict themselves in his imagination; his heart is not capable to come to compunction.

Immoderate fasting is just as harmful as intemperance, or even more so[220]. The weakness of the body which comes from eating too little does not permit one to make his prayers in the necessary quantity and with the necessary force.

The amount of prayers is determined for each by his way of life and by the measure of his spiritual and physical strength. The two mites of the widow, offered by her in the temple and comprising all her possessions, in the scales of the just God proved greater than the substantial offerings of the rich out of their plently. Judge thus also concerning prayer; determine the amount of it in conformity with your strength; remember the very wise direction of the great teacher of ascetics, "If you coerce the feeble body to deeds exceeding its strength, then by this you lay dullness on your soul and bring it disturbance, but not benefit".[221]

From a healthy and strong constitution is exacted the corresponding amount of prayer. "Every prayer" said the same great father, "in which the body is not burdened, and the heart does not come to contrition, is recognized as unripe fruit, because such a prayer is without a soul"[222].

If you are occupied by social obligations., or if you are a monk, by obediences, and do not have the opportunity to give as much time to prayer as you desire, do not be upset by this; lawfully and conscientiously completed service prepares a person for fervent prayer, and quantity is replaced by quality. Nothing contributes to flourishing in prayer as a conscience satisfied by God-pleasing activity.

Fulfilling the Gospel commandments attunes the mind and heart to pure prayer, full of compunction, and true prayer leads to thinking, feeling, acting according to the commandments of the Gospel.

Compassion for your neighbors and humility before them, expressed by external deeds and nourished in the soul, unified with a heart pure mainly from lustful thoughts and feelings, make up the foundation and power of prayer[223]. Compassion and humility are like the soul's wings by which it flies up to heaven[224]. Without them prayer cannot rise off the ground, that is, rise from carnal sophistry. This sophistry holds prayer as if by a net or snare; it disturbs, defiles, and destroys prayer.

The soul of prayer is attention[225]. As a body without a soul is dead, so prayer also without attention is dead. Without attention the prayer pronounced becomes empty loquacity, and he who prays thus is joined to those who take the name of God in vain.

Pronounce the wards of the prayer unhurriedly; do not permit your mind to wander every which way, but lock it in the words of the prayer[226]. Narrow and very sorrowful is this way for an intellect accustomed to wander freely throughout the universe; but this way leads to attention. He who tastes the great benefit of attention will begin to love to restrict his mind on the way leading to blessed attention.

Attention is the initial gift of Divine grace granted to him who toils and patiently suffers in the labor of prayer[227].

Grace-filled attention must be preceded by a personal coercion to attention; the latter must be the active testimony of a sincere desire to receive the former. Personal attention is possessed by thoughts and fantasies; it shakes because of them; the grace-filled is completely filled with firmness.

Forbid yourself dispersion of thoughts during prayer; hate dreaminess; repudiate cares by the power of faith; strike into the heart with the fear of God; and you will readily 'become accustomed to attention.

The praying mind must be in a state that is entirely true. Fantasy, no matter how enticing and attractive it might be, is the mind's own wilful composition; it leads the mind out of the state of Divine truth; it leads to a state of self-deception and delusion; and this is why is must also be rejected in prayer.

During the time of prayer one must have and with all diligence keep his mind free of images, rejecting all images which arise in the imagination; because the mind in prayer stands before the unseen God, Whom it is impossible to represent by any material image. Images, if the mind permits them in prayer, will become an impenetrable veil, a wall between

the mind and God. "Those who see nothing in their prayers, see God," said St. Meletios the Confessor[228].

If during your prayer a vision of Christ or of an Angel or of some Saint—in a word, any sort of image at all—sensually stands before you or takes form of its own self mentally within you, do not by any means accept this appearance as a true one; do not pay any attention to it; do not enter into conversation with it[229]. Otherwise you will unfailingly be subjected to delusion and the most powerful emotional injury, which has happened to many. Man, before his renewal by the Holy Spirit, is incapable of intercourse with holy spirits. As one still in the sphere of the fallen spirits, in captivity and in slavery to them, he is capable of seeing them only, and often they noting in him a lofty opinion of himself and self-deception, appear to him in the form of Angels, in the form of Christ Himself, for the perishing of his soul.

The holy icons are accepted by the Holy Church for arousing pious recollections and feelings, but by no means for the arousing of dreaminess. Standing before the icon of the Saviour, stand as if before the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, omnipresent as Divinity, and by His icon present in the place where it is located. Standing before the icon of the Mother of God, stand as if before the Most Holy Virgin Herself; but keep your mind free of images; there is the very greatest difference between being in the presence of the Lord, that is, standing before the Lord, and imagining the Lord. The feeling of the Lord's presence brings salutary fear upon the soul, brings upon it the salutary sense of reverence. But imagining the Lord and His saints imparts, as it were, materiality to the mind, leads the mind to a false, proud opinion of itself; it leads the soul to a false state, a state of self-deception[230].

A lofty state is the feeling of the presence of God! By it the mind is restrained from conversation with alien thoughts which blow against prayer; on account of this feeling, the nothingness of man is abundantly felt; because of this feeling there appears a special watchfulness over oneself, keeping a person from sins, from even the slightest of them. The sense of the presence of God is conveyed by attentive prayer. And reverent standing before the holy icons is very conducive to acquiring this.

The words of prayer, animated by attention, pierce deep into the soul, penetrate, permeate, so to say, the heart, and produce compunction in it. The words of prayer carried out with scattered thoughts, concern as if only the surface of the soul and do not produce any impression at all.

Attention and compunction are recognized as the gift of the Holy Spirit. Only the Spirit can stop the waves of the mind which runs every which way, said St. John of the Ladder[231]. Another Blessed Father said, "When compunction is with us, then God is with us"[232].

Having acquired constant attention and compunction in your prayers, attain the state of beatitude called poorness of spirit and weeping by the Gospel. You have already broken many chains of passions, already sensed the smell of spiritual freedom, already bear the pledge of salvation in your bosom. Do not abandon the narrows of the way of true prayer, and you will attain sacred repose, the mysterious sabbath; on the sabbath no earthly work is done; struggle and labor are set aside; in blessed passionlessness, outside dispersion, the soul stands before God in pure prayer, and by faith is at rest in Him in His endless goodness, by devotion to His all-holy will.

In him who struggles in prayer, success in prayer at first begins to appear by a special action of attention; from time to time it unexpectedly embraces the mind, encloses it in the words of the prayer. Afterwards it becomes far more constant and prolonged; the mind as if sticks to the words, is drawn by them into union with the heart. Finally compunction suddenly is combined with attention, and makes the person a temple of prayer, a temple of God.

Offer God quiet and humble prayers, and not ardent and flaming ones. When you become a mysterious priest of prayer, then you will enter into God's tabernacle, and from there you will fill the censer of prayer with sacred fire. It is forbidden to offer unclean fire—blind, material heating of the blood—before the all-holy God.

The sacred fire of prayer, borrowed from God's tabernacle, is holy love, poured into true Christians by the Holy Spirit[233]. He who makes the effort to join prayer with the fire of the blood, in his self-deception, deceived by his opinion of him self, thinks to carry out service to God, but actually he angers Him.

Do not seek delights in prayer; they are by no means appropriate for the sinner. The sinner's wish to feel delight is already self-deception. Seek that your dead, hardened heart might come to life, that it might open fur the sensing of its sinfulness, of its fallenness, of its nothingness; that it might see its sins, plead guilty to them in self denial. Then the true fruit of prayer will appear within you, true repentance. You will groan before God and will cry

may forgive you your trespasses. But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses. **Mark 11 20–26**

219 Word 89

220 St. Cassian, *Word on Reasoning*, Philokalia, pt. 4.

221 St Isaac the Syrian, Word 85

222 Ibid. Word 11

223 St. Isaac the Syrian. Word 56, 57

224 Ps. 104 7

225 St. Symeon the New Thelogian, *Word on Three Methods of Prayer*, Philokalia, Pt. 1.

226 *The Ladder*, Step 28, 17

227 Callistus and Ignatius of Xanthipoulos, Philolalia, Pt. 5. Chapter 24

228 This saint's essay "On Prayer" is included in the book *Klasy*, published by the Optina Hermitage.

229 St. Gregory of Sinai, *On Deception*: beneficial chapters, Philokalia, Pt. 1.

230 Word of St. Symeon on *Three Types of Prayer*.

231 *The Ladder,* Step 28, 17

232 Hieromonk Seraphim of Sarov

233 Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope: And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that,

while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. **Romans 5 1–8**

234 St. Isaac the Syrian, *Word* 55

235 Ps. 77 30–31. This paragraph and the two following are borrowed from the *Fifth Word* of St. Isaac the Syrian.

236 I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all: Yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue. Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men. In the law it is written, With men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people; and yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord. Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: but prophesying serveth not for them that believe not, but for them which believe. **I Corinthians 14 18–22**

237 And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him. **Matthew 6 5–8**

238 According to the explanation of Blessed Theophylact the Bulgarian

239 And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. And

cut to Him with prayer from the disastrous state of your soul which was suddenly revealed to you; you will cry out as from a prison, as from the grave, as from hell.

Repentance gives birth to prayer, and in a doubled amount is born of its own daughter.

Delight in prayer is the unique lot of the holy elect of God renewed by the Holy Spirit. He who is being enthralled by impulses of the blood, enthralled by vainglory and lust, invents delights for himself; he is in pitiful self-deception. The soul darkened by living according to the flesh is very inclined to such inventions—the soul which was deceived and is being deceived by its pride.

The sensations born of prayer and repentance consist of casing the conscience, of spiritual peace, of reconciliation with your neighbors and with the circumstances of your life, of mercy and sympathy for mankind, of restraint from passions, of cold ness towards the world, of submission to God, of strength in the struggle with sinful thoughts and impulses. Be satisfied with these sensations—in which, moreover, there is the taste of hope of salvation. Do not prematurely seek lofty spiritual states and ecstasies of prayer. In reality they are not at all what they seem to be to our imagination; the action of the Holy Spirit, from which lofty states of prayer appear, is inaccessible for the carnal mind[234].

Learn to pray with your whole intellect, with your whole soul, with all your strength. You ask: what does this mean? —One cannot know this except by experience. Strive constantly to be occupied by attentive prayer; attentive prayer will afford the answer to your question for you by blessed experience.

The labor of prayer seems burdensome, boring, dry for the mind accustomed to being occupied only by corruptible things. With toil the habit of prayer is acquired; when this habit is acquired, then It becomes a source of unceasing spiritual con solation.

Prayer, as was already said above, is the mother of all virtuosi obtain the mother; with her, her children will also come to the home of your soul; they will make it a sanctuary of God.

Before starting every deed, offer prayer to God; by this attract God's blessing on your deeds, and by it judge your deeds. Deeds contrary to God's commandments bring to a halt the contemplation of prayer.

He who turns to God in prayer for understanding, help, and blessing before every deed and word, carries out his life as if under the gaze of God, under His guidance. The habit of such behaviour is easy; there is nothing quicker than the mind, said Barsonuphius the Great; there is nothing easier than to raise, upon meeting every need, the mind to God (Answer 216).

In the difficult situations in life increase the frequency of your prayers to God. It is surer to have recourse to prayer than to the empty considerations of weak human reason, consideration, which for the most part turn out to be unrealizable. It is surer to lean on almighty God by faith and prayer than—by wavering considerations, and suppositions—on your own impotent reason.

Do not be imprudent in your petitions, so as not to anger God by your lack of reason; he who asks something low or worthless of the King of kings abases Him. The Israelites, ignoring God's miracles performed in. the desert for them, asked for the fulfillment of their belly's desires—**but while the meat was yet in their mouths, the wrath of God came upon them**[235].

Offer God petitions in conformance with His greatness. Solomon asked wisdom of Him; he received it, and with it a multitude of other good things, because he asked wisely. Elisha asked of Him the grace of the Holy Spirit doubled before his great teacher, and his petition was accepted.

He who seeks in his prayer the corruptible goods of the earth arouses the indignation of the Heavenly King against himself. The Angels and Archangels—these are His magnates—gaze upon you at the time of your prayers; they behold what you ask of God. They wonder and rejoice when they see an earthly being leaving his earth and offering a petition to receive some thing heavenly; they sorrow at the opposite of this, at him who does not pay attention to the heavenly and asks things of the earth and corruption.

We are commanded to be children in malice, but not in understanding[236]. In prayer the reasoning of this world, verbacious and conceited, is repudiated; from this it does not follow that feeblemindedness is adapted to or required in prayer. Perfect intelligence is required in it, spiritual intelligence, full of humility and simplicity, often expressed in prayer not by words but by a prayerful silence far higher than words. Prayerful silence overcomes the mind, when suddenly there stand before it new, spiritual conceptions inexpressible in the words of this world and age, when there appears

a peculiarly alive sensation of God being present. Before the incomprehensible greatness of Divinity His impotent creation, man, falls silent.

The verbocity[237], condemned by the Lord in the prayers of the heathen, consists of numerous petitions for temporal goods, which fill the prayers of the heathen, and in that oratorical exposition in which they are offered[238]—as if rhetorical ornamentations, material sonority, and the verbal style can act on God just as they act on the hearing and nerves of carnal men. Condemning this verbocity, the Lord by no means condemned prolonged prayers, as it seemed to certain, heretics; He Himself sanctified prolonged prayer by spending long periods of time in prayer. **And He continued all night in prayer to God**, the Gospel relates of the Lord[239].

The lengthiness of the prayers of God's saints is not from verbocity, but from abundant spiritual sensations which appear in. them during prayer. By the abundance and power of such sensations, time, so to say, is destroyed, thus being transfigured for the saints of God into eternity.

When the man of prayer attains success in his blessed labor, then the variety of thoughts in the psalms and other prayers become incompatible with his state. The prayer of the publican and other very brief prayers express more satisfactorily the in expressible, extensive desire of the heart, and. often the saints of God spent many hours, days, and years in such prayer, not feeling the need of variety of thoughts for their powerful, concentrated prayer[240].

The prayers composed by heretics have much in common with the prayers of the heathen; there is verbocity in them; there is earthly beauty of words in them; there is heating of the blood in them; there is the insufficiency of repentance in them; there is the yearning for the wedding of the Son of God directly from the brothel of passions in them; there is self-deception in them. They are alien to the Holy Spirit; from them blows the fatal infection of the dark spirit, the evil spirit, the spirit of falsehood and ruin.

Great is the occupation of prayer! The Holy Apostles, for the sake of prayer and for the sake and of serving the Word refused service to their neighbors in their bodily needs. **It is not reason**, they said, **that we should leave the word of God and serve tables.... We will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the Word**[241], that is, in conversation with God in prayer and in conversation about God with their neighbors, informing them of the Tri-substantial God and God the Word become man.

The occupation of prayer is the highest occupation for the mind of man; the state of purity, alien to entertainment, attained for the mind by prayer, is its highest natural state; its being carried on high to God, for which the first principle is pure prayer, is a state above nature[242].

Into the super-natural state enter only the saints of God, renewed by the Holy Spirit, stripped of the old Adam, clothed in the New, capable of **with open face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, being changed unto the same image from glory to glory** by the action of the Spirit of the Lord[243]. They receive the greater part of Divine revelations during the exercise of prayer, as in such a time, the soul is especially prepared, especially cleansed, attuned to intercourse with God[244]. Thus the holy Apostle Peter at the time of prayer saw the famous sheet descending from heaven[245]. Thus at the time of prayer the Angel appeared to Cornelius the centurion[246]. Thus, when the Apostle Paul was praying in the temple in Jerusalem, the Lord appeared to him and commanded him to leave Jerusalem at once: **Depart, for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles**, He said to him[247].

Prayer is commanded by God, just, as is repentance. There is one end appointed for prayer just as for repentance: entrance into the kingdom of heaven, into the kingdom of God, which is within us. **Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand[248]. The kingdom of God is within you[249]. Ask and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For everyone that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. Your heavenly Father shall give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him[250]. And shall not God avenge His own elect, which cry day and night unto Him** and complaining against the violence done them by infection and demons? I tell you that He will avenge them speedily[251]. The entrance into the heavenly kingdom, which by holy baptism is planted in the heart of every Christian, is the development of this kingdom by the action of the Holy Spirit.

Hasten by prayer, soul thirsting for salvation, hasten after the Saviour, accompanied by His numberless disciples. Call after Him by prayer like the Canaanite woman[252]. Do not be grieved by His prolonged inattention; magnanimously and humbly endure the sorrows and insults, which He permits you on the way of prayer. For success in prayer there is the unfailing need for help from

when it was day, he called unto him his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles. **Luke 6 12–13**

240 **Hieromonk Seraphim of Sarov**, a monk especially accomplished in prayer, spent a thousand days and a thousand nights standing on a rock and crying to the Lord: *God, be merciful to me a sinner!* Sayings of the life and labors of Fr. Seraphim, Moscow, 1844 edition.

241 And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration. Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word. **Acts 6 1–4**

242 *The Ladder*, Step 28

243 For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious. Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech: And not as Moses, which put a vail over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished: But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which vail is done away in Christ. But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart. Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away. Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory

to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord
II Corinthians 3 11–18

244 St Isaac the Syrian, Word 16

245 There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian band, A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway. He saw in a vision evidently about the ninth hour of the day an angel of God coming in to him, and saying unto him, Cornelius. And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God. And now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter: He lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the sea side: he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do. And when the angel which spake unto Cornelius was departed, he called two of his household servants, and a devout soldier of them that waited on him continually; And when he had declared all these things unto them, he sent them to Joppa. On the morrow, as they went on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the housetop to pray about the sixth hour: And he became very hungry, and would have eaten: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance, And saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth.
Acts 10 1–11

246 Acts 10 3

247 And it came to pass, that, when I was come again to Jerusalem, even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance; And saw him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me. And I said, Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that

temptation. According to your faith, for your humility, for the persistance of your prayer, He will console you by healing your daughter possessed by the action of passions—by healing your thoughts and feelings having recreated them from passionate to passionless, from sinful to holy, from carnal to spiritual. Amen.

February 2

Speaking about the gradual spread of the celebration of **Christ**'s Nativity, **St. John Chrysostom** said: *"Magnificent and noble trees, when planted in the ground, shortly attain great heights and become heavily laden with fruit; so it is with this day."* So it is also with the day of the Meeting of our Lord. From the beginning this day was commorated among Christians, but the solemn celebration began in the time of the great Emperor Justinian. During his reign, a great pestilence afflicted the people in Constantinople and its vicinity, so that five thousand or more people died daily. At the same time a terrible earthquake occurred in Antioch. Seeing man's inability to prevent these misfortunes, the emperor, in consultation with the patriarch, ordered a period of fasting and prayer throughout the entire empire. And, on the day of the Meeting itself, he arranged great processions throughout the towns and villages, that the Lord might show compassion on His people. And truly, the Lord did show compassion, for the epidemic and earthquake ceased at once. This occurred in the year 544 A.D. From that time on, the Feast of the Meeting began to be celebrated as a great feast of the Lord. The tree, in time, grew and began to bring forth abundant fruit.

Father John Of Cronstadt

On Prayer

Orthodox Life, July-August 1965 (4), pp. 21– 35

Part I - On The Essence, Meaning And Power Of Prayer

✠ Prayer is proof of the existence of my reasoning personality, of my God-image; it is the pledge of my future divinity and beatitude. I was created out of nothing; I am nothing before God, having nothing of my own. But I, by His grace, am a personality, possess intelligence, a heart and a free will, and in my intelligence and freedom I am able by approaching Him in my heart to gradually increase His eternal kingdom within me; to, gradually, still further increase His gifts within me; to draw from Him—as out of an everflowing and inexhaustible Source—every spiritual and material good, especially the spiritual. Prayer suggests to me that I am the image of God; that through humble and grateful disposition of my soul before God, with my free will, I, by infinitely multiplying God's spiritual gifts, am thus able to infinitely perfect myself and to enhance my God-image, my heavenly beatitude—for which I have been predetermined—to infinity. Oh, prayer is the sign of my great dignity, with which my Creator has honored me. At one and the same time, however, prayer reminds me of my nonentity (I came from nothing and have nothing of my own, for which reason I beseech God for everything), as well as of my greatest dignity (I am God s image; I am divine; I may be called God's friend, just as was Abraham, the father of believers—if only I would but believe unquestionably in the existence of my God, in His goodness and almighty power; and become assimilated to Him in this life through deeds of love and mercy.)

✠ In prayers: supplication—is against our proud flesh, which credits everything to itself; gratitude—is against the insensibility of our flesh toward God's countless blessings; praise—is against our carnal man, who seeks glory only for himself.

✠ God is Truth: and my prayer must be truthful too, just as life. God is light, and so must my prayer be offered in the light of mind and heart. God is fire, and my prayer must—like life—be burning. God is absolutely free: and so must my prayer be a free outpouring from the heart. What wealth of human spirit: let him but think of God in his heart, let him but desire spiritual union with God—and He is immediately with him. And neither the walls of houses, nor any riveted steel of prisons—neither mountains nor chasms—can prevent such union. God is immediately with you; so also are the Angels and the Saints—with God, all of them are before your eyes, beside your heart like the closest of friends—are ever in your presence. O, the wealth of the human spirit!

✠ Prayer is the uplifting of the mind and heart toward God is the contemplation of God, audacious conversation of creature with Creator, the reverent standing of the soul before the King and Life Himself Who giveth life to all; to forget all that surrounds us for His sake—is food for the soul, air and light, it is the soul's life-giving warmth, it is the cleansing of sins; it is Christ's blessed yoke and His light burden. Prayer is the constant feeling (awareness) of one's spiritual frailty or poverty;

believed on thee: And when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him. And he said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles.
Acts 22 17–21

248 Now when Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison, he departed into Galilee; And leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea coast, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim: That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles; The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up. From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.
Matthew 4 12–17

249 And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.
Luke 17 20–21

250 And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves; For a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him? And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee. I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth. And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and

it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?
Luke 11 5–13

251 And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith. And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?
Luke 18 6–8

252 Then Jesus went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon. And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil. But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us. But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me. But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs. And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table. Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.
Matthew 15 21–28

253 Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the

it is the soul's consecration, a foretaste of future beatitude, is angelic beatitude, is the heavenly rain which refreshes, satiates and makes fruitful the soil of the soul, is the power and strength of the soul and body; it is the airing and clearing of our mental atmosphere, enlightenment of the personality, joy of spirit, a golden bond which unites creation with its Creator; is cheerfulness and courage in all of life's sorrows and temptations, is success in deeds, is dignity tantamount to that of the angels; is the consolidation of faith, hope and love. Prayer is the reform of our lives, is the mother of heartfelt contrition and tears; is strong inducement to perform works of mercy; is safety in life and destruction of the fear of death; is the neglect of earthly treasures and wish for heavenly goods; is expectation of the Judge of the universe, of common resurrection and of life in the hereafter; is increased efforts in avoiding eternal torments, is the constant search for the mercy of forgiveness from the Lord; is walking before the eyes of God, is the blessed vanishing before the Creator and Provider of all, is vital water of the soul; prayer is the containing of all people in one's heart through love, is the bringing down of heaven into the soul, is the containing of the Holy Trinity within the heart according to the words: "We will come unto him and make our abode with him." [John 14:23][253].

✠ Prayer is the constant feeling of one's spiritual poverty frailty; the contemplation within oneself, in people and in nature of the works of God's wisdom, goodness and all-powerful strength prayer is a constant feeling of gratitude.

✠ When you pray, make every effort to feel with your heart, the truth and power of your prayer, and feed upon these qualities upon imperishable food; saturate your heart with them as with dew warm yourself as by a blessed fire.

✠ In prayer—as in any other activity in your life—avoid over-anxiety, doubt and diabolic dreaminess. Let your spiritual ye be simple, so that the entire body of your prayer, your deeds and your life may be bright.

✠ As long as we stand in zealous prayer, so long does the soul feel calm, and warm, and light: because we are then with God and in God; but no sooner do we stop praying than come temptations and all types of confusion. O, thrice-blessed time of prayer!

✠ While praying, we must unfailingly take hold of our heart and direct it toward the Lord. It must not be cold, sly, untrue and double-faced. Otherwise, of what benefit is our prayer, our fasting and attendance at divine services before confession and Communion? Is it good to hear from the Lord these angry words: "*This people draweth nigh unto Me with their mouth, and honoreth Me with their lips; but their heart is far from Me.*" [Matthew 15 8][254]. And so, let us not stand in church spiritually enfeebled, but let each one's spirit burn in labouring for the Lord. Even fellow humans value but little those services which we perform coldly, from habit. While what God wants is precisely our heart. "*My son, give Me thine heart*" [Proverbs 23 26][255] — because the heart is the main thing in man: it is his life; our heart is even more—it is the man himself. That is why he who does not pray or serve God with his heart, does what amounts to not pray at all, since only his body is then praying, which by itself—without the soul—is nothing but earth. Remember that when you stand in prayer, you are standing before God, containing the intelligence of all. For this reason your prayer must be—so to speak—all spirit, all reason.

✠ During prayer, be like a babbling baby, blending into one spirit with that of your prayer. Consider yourself a nonentity and accept prayers as a great gift of God. Completely renounce the reasonings of your flesh and do not heed them, for "*knowledge* (of the flesh) *puffeth up*" [1 Cor. 8 1][256], it doubts, day-dreams, blasphemes. If during prayer, or at other times, the enemy (i.e. the devil) makes your soul stumble with some type of blasphemies or abominations, do not lose heart from them, but firmly say within your heart: it is to cleanse us from these and similar sins that our Lord Jesus Christ came to earth; it is to help us in and similar failings of the spirit that the All-Merciful had come; and when you will have said these words with faith, your heart will be immediately at rest, for the Lord will cleanse it. In general, we must not become dejected by any sin coming in dreaminess, but must trust in the Saviour. O, boundless com. passion of God! O, the greatest of the God-Man's service to us sinners! Even up to now does He help in His love of mankind, cleansing and saving us. Thus may the enemy's power be put to shame.

✠ Man's thoughts exert an extremely powerful influence over the state and inclination of his heart and actions; consequently—in order that the heart be pure, kind and calm, while the will inclined toward kindness and goodness—it is necessary to cleanse your thoughts with prayer, the reading of Holy Scriptures and writings of the Church Fathers; through meditation on the perishability, transience and disappearance of earthly pleasures.

✠ As close as your thought is to you, as close as faith is to your heart—that is how close God is to you, the livelier and firmer the thought of God, the livelier the faith and realization of one's frailty and insignificance, of the feeling of the need for God—the closer He is. Or, as close is the air to the body, so close is God to the soul. For God is—so to speak—the mental atmosphere which is breathed by all the Angels, souls of the Saints, the souls of people who lead particularly pious lives. You cannot—not even for a minute—live without God, and, indeed, you live by Him each minute: "*For in Him we live, and move, and have our being*" [Acts 17 28][257].

✠ The heart's insensibility to the truth of words in prayer arises out of the heart's disbelief and out of one's insensibility to one's sinfulness, while this, in turn, flows out of a hidden feeling of pride. In measuring his feelings during prayer, a man is able to discover whether he is proud or humble: the more emotional, ardent the prayer—the humbler he; the more insensible prayer—the prouder the man.

✠ Try to achieve child-like simplicity in your people and in your prayers to God. Simplicity is good and virtue. God is absolutely simple, because He is absolutely good. Let not your own soul, also, be split between good and evil.

✠ Learn to pray, force yourself to pray: you will find it difficult at first, but later, the more you will force yourself, the easier it will become. But, at first, you must always force yourself.

✠ As you pray, imagine as if only the One God in Three persons is before you, and that apart from Him there is nothing else. Imagine God to be in the world in the same way as the soul is in the body, although He is infinitely above the world and is not limited by it, while your body is small and all of it is taken up in your small soul. But the universe is great. God is infinitely great and throughout the whole of creation God fills everything—"*is everywhere present and fillest all things.*"

✠ Our Saviour deigned to become incarnate so as to not only save us when sins and passions have overcome us and when we will have been already entangled by them, but also so as to save us by our prayers while sin and passion are only striving to overwhelm us, when they are fighting us. We must not slumber and faint-heartedly give up the battle when passions are warring against us, but especially then must we be on our guard, be vigilant and pray to Christ not to permit us to sin. It is not when flames have already swept through the whole building that one should begin to save a house from fire, but the best time is when the fire is only beginning. The same applies to a soul: the soul is the house, and passions—the fire. *"Neither give place to the devil"* [Ephesians 4:27][258].

✠ The evil one tries to scatter our prayer like so much sand, wants to make our words like dry sand, without binding and without heart-felt warmth. Prayer is, at times, a structure built on sand, at others—on rock. They build on sand who pray without faith, absent mindedly, coldly,—such a prayer falls apart by itself and brings no benefit to the one who is praying; while they build on stone who, throughout the length of their prayer, axe their eyes fixed upon the Lord and who pray to Him as to one alive, conversing with Him face to face.

✠ Let us measure the worth of our prayer by a human measuring-stick, by the quality of our relations with people? Sometimes we express our requests, praises, gratitude—or do something for them—coldly, without having our heart in it, in the line of duty or out of courtesy, while at other times—warmly, from the heart and with love; or sometimes—hypocritically, and at others—sincerely. We behave exactly the same way also with God! We must always express our praises, gratitude and requests to God from the whole heart; we must always perform and task before him from all our heart; we must love Him and trust Him always with our heart.

✠ Is it possible to pray with haste without damaging one's prayer? Yes, it is, but only for those who have mastered inner prayer with a pure heart. In prayer, it is essential that the heart sincerely desire the object of its requests, that it feel the truth of what it is saying, and a pure heart has this quality, as it were within its nature. Which is why it can pray at the same time hurriedly and in a pleasing manner to God, since haste does not harm the truth (sincerity) of prayer. But those who have not acquired prayer of the heart must pray without hurrying, awaiting the corresponding echo in their heart of each word of prayer And this does not soon come to a man who is unaccustomed to prayerful contemplation. For this reason, the slow articulation of words in prayer must be set as an indispensable rule for such people. Wait until each word reverberates in your heart with its corresponding echo.

✠ Just as an evil man, in coming with a request to one who is kind, mild and humble, for the better success of his petition attempts to become like the latter, so must a Christian, in approaching

world? Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me.
John 14 22–24

254 Then came to Jesus scribes and Pharisees, which were of Jerusalem, saying, Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread. But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition? For God commanded, saying, Honour thy father and mother: and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death. But ye say, Whosoever shall say to his father or his mother, It is a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; And honour not his father or his mother, he shall be free. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition. Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. And he called the multitude, and said unto them, Hear, and understand: Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man.
Matthew 1 1–11

255 The father of the righteous shall greatly rejoice: and he that begetteth a wise child shall have joy of him. Thy father and thy mother shall be glad, and she that bare thee shall rejoice. My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways.
Proverbs 23 24–26

256 Now as touching things offered unto idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffeth up,

but charity edifieth. And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know. But if any man love God, the same is known of him.
1 Corinthians 8 1–3

257 God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring.
Acts 17 24–28

258 Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another. Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: Neither give place to the devil. Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth. Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.
Ephesians 4 25–29

259 But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all

our Lord, His Most Pure Mother, the Angels or the Saints—for his prayer to be successful—become as far as possible, like our Lord Himself, or His Most Pure Mother, the Angels or the Saints. And it is precisely in this that the secret of our prayer's degree of approximation and their being soon heard lies.

✠ Surrender your hearts to God, petitioners—that loving, sincere heart with which you love your children, your parents, benefactors and friends, in which you feel the sweetness of unfeigned and pure love.

✠ Sometimes, during prolonged prayer, only a few minutes are truly pleasing to God and represent a true prayer and service to God. The main thing in prayer is—nearness of your heart to God, evidenced by the sweetness of God's presence in the soul.

✠ Constrained prayer develops hypocrisy, makes one unfit for any task requiring mental concentration and makes a man sluggish in everything, even in performing his routine tasks. This must convince all who pray in such a manner to remedy their prayer. One must pray willingly and energetically from the heart. Pray to God not from sorrow nor from want (compulsively)—*"for God loveth a cheerful giver"* [2 Corinth. 9 7][259].

✠ God's greatest gift—which we need most of all and which we receive very often from God as a result of our prayer—is peace of the heart, in the words of our Saviour: *"Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."* [Matthew 11 28][260]. And rejoice and consider yourselves rich, as possessing everything when you will have received peace

✠ In beseeching our Lord, or the Most Pure Mother of God, or the Angels and Saints, it is essential to have the faith of the centurion of Capernaum. He believed that just as his soldiers listened to him and obeyed his words, the more simply would his request be fulfilled by the Almighty word of the Good Lord. If creatures with their limited power carried out his requests, then would not the Lord Himself with His almighty power fulfill the pleas of His servants, when they approached Him with faith and hope. Will not our own petitions, offered up with faith, hope and love, also be fulfilled by His servants—the Most Pure Mother of God, the Angels and Saints, who are faithful and powerful with grace and intercession before God. Verily I, too, believe with the centurion that should I ask some Saint correctly and for what is necessary: "grant this"—he will grant it; "come to my assistance"—and he will come; "do this"—and he will do it. This is the sort of simple and powerful faith we must have.

✠ Outward prayer is not infrequently performed at the expense of the inner, while inner prayer—at the expense of the outer. That is, when I pray with my lips or read audibly, then many words do not reach the heart: I am divided, am being a hypocrite. I articulate one thing with my tongue while something else is in my heart; my speak the truth, while the state of my heart is not in accord with the prayer's words. I fix my attention upon their meaning and power, gradually training the heart to become accustomed to the truth, and enter into that state of spirit, in which the words of the prayer are written, and in this manner I come to learn little by little, to pray in spirit and in truth, in the words of eternal Truth: *"They that worship God, must worship Him in spirit and in Truth"* [John 4 24][261]. Whenever a man prays on the surface, audibly, then he is not always able to detect all the movements of his heart, which are too fast, so that he must of necessity concern himself with articulating, with the external form of words. In this way, an utterly false prayer is produced by many sextons who read cursorily: they appear to be praying with their lips, to all outward appearances you see them akin to the pious, while their heart sleeps and knows not what lips are saying. This happens because they hurry and ponder with their hearts over what they are saying. We must pray for them, just as they pray for us; we must pray for their words to reach their heart and to breathe with its warmth. They pray for us with the words of saints, while we pray for them.

✠ All, beginning to work for the Lord in prayer, learn to be, similar to Him, humble, with meek and truthful heart; do not have slyness in heart, duplicity, do not be cold; try to have His spirit for who does not possess the spirit of Christ is not His,—and the Lord seeks in us something similar and related to Himself to which His grace could be implanted. Remember that not a single word will be lost in vain in prayer if it be said from the heart: the Lord hears each word and each word is on His balance. It seems to us at times as if our words only beat the air in vain, resound as a voice in the wilderness: no. We must remember that the Lord understands us in our prayer, if it is permitted to say so, i.e. our words—in exactly the same way as perfect men of prayer understand themselves, for man is the image of God. The Lord replies to each wish of the heart, whether expressed in words or not.

✠ So that a Christian may live a Christian life and life of the spirit be not completely extinguished within him, private and public prayer is essential to him, it is as essential to attend Divine Services in church with faith, comprehension and zeal, as it is essential to refill a lampadka with oil for it to burn and not die out; while since sincere, ardent prayer comes from abstinence, then in order to uphold within yourself the Christian life or ardor of faith, hope and love, abstinence and fasting are needed. Nothing so soon extinguishes within us the spirit of faith as intemperance, gourmandizing and surfeit and a dissipated, loose life. —I die away, die spiritually whenever I do not serve in church a whole week and flare up, revive in body and heart when I serve, forcing myself to not merely formal prayer, but actual, spiritual, sincere, flaming.

✠ Contemplate God firmly with your spiritual eyes and during contemplation of Him, ask what you wish for in the name of Jesus Christ—and it will be done to you. God will be everything for you in an instant, for He is a simple Being, above all time and space, and during the minutes of your faith, your spiritual union with Him, will fulfill for you everything you require for the salvation of yourself and your neighbor, and you will, for this period of time, yourself be a participant to Divinity in your most sincere communion with Him: *"I have said: ye are gods."* just as between God and yourself at this time there will be no interval, so also between your word and your performance will there be no interval; you will speak—and it will be immediately performed, just as God *"commanded, and they were created."* This is so—both as regards the Sacraments, as spiritual prayer in general. Although in the Sacraments everything is accomplished owing to the grace of priesthood in which a priest is vested, for the sake of the supreme High Priest Himself __ Christ, Whose image the priest bears upon himself,—for which reason, although he bears his office unworthily, though he be suspicious, sceptical or mistrustful, nevertheless God's mystery is performed swiftly, in the twinkling of an eye.

✠ Some say: we are soon tired of praying. From what? From not imagining vividly the Lord before them,—Who is to the right of you. Look at Him ceaselessly with eyes of the heart, and then you will stand an entire night in prayer without tiring. What am I saying—a night! Three days and three nights will you stand and not become tired. Remember those who were standing on top of pillars. They stood many years on a pillar in a prayerful mood of the spirit and overcame their flesh which, as in you so also in them, was also prone to laziness. While you feel burdened by a few hours of public prayer, by even one hour.

Chapter II - Prayer—Breath Of The Holy Spirit

✠ Prayer—is spiritual breathing; in praying we breathe by the Holy Spirit: *"praying in the Holy Ghost"* [Jude 1 20][262]. And so, all Church prayers—are the breath of the Holy Spirit, as if spiritual air and at same time light, a spiritual fire, spiritual food and spiritual clothing.

✠ In prayers and Church songs, throughout their entire field, there moves the Spirit of truth. Everything contradictory and blasphemous which comes into the head from without—is from the devil, the father of lies, the slanderer; prayers and chants—are the breath of the Holy Spirit.

✠ We have felt in our heart during prayer or during the fading of God's word and other books containing sacred matter (even at times lay books also—of a worthy nature, where for example, is described some kind of event, showing the work of God's Providence over people), or in pious talks—a still small voice, so that along your body as if electricity has passed. This is the Lord visiting us. *"A still small voice"* [1 Kings 19 12][263].

✠ *"Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me?"* [John 14 9–10][264]. Don't you know that during prayer the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are in you and you in Them?

✠ Prayer is the breath of the soul as air is the natural breath of the body. We breathe by the Holy Spirit. You cannot say a single word of prayer from your whole heart without the Holy Spirit. In praying mouth to mouth you converse with the Lord and if you have your spiritual mouth opened by faith and love you as it were breathe in from Him at the same time the spiritual blessings requested through the Holy Spirit.

✠ When you stand up to pray burdened by many sins and possessed by despair, begin to pray with hope, with a burning spirit, remember then that the Spirit of God Himself helps us in our infirmities, *"making intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered."* When you will have remembered with faith about this action within us of God's Spirit, then tears of tender emotion

things, may abound to every good work: (As it is written, He hath dispersed abroad; he hath given to the poor: his righteousness remaineth for ever. Now he that ministereth seed to the sower both minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness;) Being enriched in every thing to all bountifulness, which causeth through us thanksgiving to God.
2 Corinthians 9 6–11

260 At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight. All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him. Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.
Matthew 11 25–30

261 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.
John 4 21–24

262 But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. These be they

who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit. But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.
Jude 1 17–21

will flow from your eyes and you will come to feel peace in your heart, a sweetness, justification and joy in the Holy Spirit, you will cry out with words of the heart: Abba, Father!

Chapter III - Prayer—A Standing In The Presence Of The Holy Trinity And Congregation Of Dwellers Of Heaven!

263 And he said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the LORD. And, behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the LORD; but the LORD was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the LORD was not in the earthquake: And after the earthquake a fire; but the LORD was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice. And it was so, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entering in of the cave. And, behold, there came a voice unto him, and said, What doest thou here, Elijah?
1 Kings 19 11–13

✠ In calling the Lord God in Three Persons in Prayer, remember that you are calling the Father of all creatures, Who had no beginning, of Angels and men, that all the Heavenly Hosts regard you, the caller, with wonder and look upon you with love because you are calling with faith and love and proper reverence the common to us and them Creator, Pantocrator and Lord, Whom they love immeasurably, before Whom they are strongly reverent. O, what high joy and beatitude, what greatness, what honour it is to call the eternal Father! Value constantly and unfailingly this highest of joys, this beatitude, which was granted to you by your God's infinite goodness, and do not forget yourself during your prayer. God is listening to you. Angel's and God's holy men are listening to you—February 26, 1864. I shed tears writing these lines.

264 Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake.
John 14 8–11

✠ When you are praying alone and your spirit is dejected and begins to become bored and oppressed by loneliness, remember then, as always, that upon you look down with eyes that are brighter than the sun—the triune God, all the holy Angels, your guardian Angel and God's holy men. Truly, for all of them are one in God, and where God is, there also are they. Wherever the sun turns, there also all its rays are turned. Understand what is being said. Always pray with a burning heart, and for this never overeat and do not drink to excess. Remember with Whom you are talking! People very often forget with Whom they are talking in prayer, Who witnesses their prayers. They forget that they are talking with the Vigilant and All-seeing, that to their conversation with God are listening all the Heavenly Hosts and God's holy men.

✠ When you pray to Our Lady or to some Saint, imagine firmly that you are a member of the Church in which Our Lady—is the edifice's main stone. *"The Origin of the spiritual building"* (Akathist to the Most Pure Mother of God, ikos 10) and know that you are closely tied from within with all the heavenly dwellers as a stone of the building, although soft and not firm. Thus comprehending, you will understand why prayers reach the saints so easily: for all of us are under the one Head—Christ [cf. Ephes. 1 22][265] and all are animated by the one Spirit of God.

✠ At the end of home, morning and evening prayers call the holy patriarchs, prophets, Apostles, saints, martyrs, witnesses, holy men, abstainers, or ascetics, wealth-spurners,—so as to, by seeing in them the realization of every virtue, to also yourself become an imitator of every virtue. From the patriarchs learn child-like faith and obedience to the Lord; from the prophets and Apostles—zeal for the glory of God and for the salvation of human souls; from the saints—zeal to propagate the word of God and in general to assist by writing in print to the most possible glorification of God's name, to the strengthening of faith, hope and love in Christians; from martyrs and witnesses—firmness for the faith and piety before people who are unbelieving and wicked; from ascetics—crucification of the flesh with its passions and desires, of prayer and thought of God; from the wealth-spurners—poverty and free assistance to the needy.

265 Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye

Chapter IV - Word In Prayer

✠ Word even in our mouth is already creative, forming articulate sounds; with word emerges man's living spirit not separating from thought and word. You see, word by its own nature, is creative even in us. Why is it then that we are at times sceptical and suspicious of the word's creative power, for example, in prayer, that the prayer—this verbal service—will inevitably bring down to us the mercy of the Lord? Thus the word ceaselessly creates flesh: articulate sounds, and writings, or our books, are they not flesh with which word has become invested? While we have become so accustomed to hearing and seeing this that it seems to us this utterly does not merit special attention. Not only is the nature of God creative, but by His gift, also the nature of created

spiritually-endowed creatures—is creative under God's control: *"Be fruitful, and multiply"* [Gen. 1 28][266]. The souls of living creatures grow themselves bodies under God's supervision (the spider, bee, worm). Thus, men, through the power given to them by God, up to now are fruitful and multiply upon the earth; thus, people and animals create for themselves everything that is essential for life, especially man—this most inventive of beings, which amazes with its infinite creativity in all forms of art. Since the Word—the Creator is everywhere present, so everywhere, although not to infinity, are His creations also spread, and everywhere does He build and if need be—transfigurates.

✠ The Word of God is exactly the same as God Himself For this reason believe without question in each word of the Lord, the word of God is—deed; and your word must be deed; consequently, having given your word, carry it out without fail; consequently, in prayer, too, our words must be deed and truth, am not falsehood, not simulation, not flattery. So also throughout life.

✠ During prayer always firmly believe and remember that every thought and word of yours may, undoubtedly, become deeds. *"For with God nothing shall be impossible"* [Luke 1 37][267]. *"But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit"* [1 Corinth. 6 17][268]. This signifies that even your words shall not be without power. *"All things are possible to him that believeth"* [Mark 9 23][269]. Treasure your word: the word is precious. *"Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof on the day of judgement"* [Matthew 12 36][270].

✠ When praying, pay steadfast attention to the words of the prayer, feeling them in your heart. Do not withdraw your mind from them to any other thoughts. When praying during Divine service, during the celebration of the Sacraments or having prayers upon various occasions rely firmly upon the words themselves of the Church prayers, believing that not a single word is placed there in vain, that every one of them has its power, that in each word dwells the Lord Himself (in His Three hypostasis), "Who is everywhere present and fills all things": think thus:—I myself am nothing, the Lord does everything. Also think: when I speak—God the Word, speaks in me. I need be careful for nothing. *"Casting all your care"*, it is said, *"upon Him, for He careth for you."* [1 Peter 5 7][271].

✠ As in God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost are undivided, so also in prayer and in our daily life the thought, the word, and the deed ought to be undivided. If you ask anything of God, believe that it will be done in accordance with your request, as God pleases. If you read the Word of God, believe that everything that is spoken of in it was, is and shall be; or was done, is being done, and shall be done. Believe thus, speak thus, read thus, and pray thus. Great is the Word; great is the thinking, speaking, and acting soul, the image and likeness of the Almighty Trinity. Man, know yourself! Know what you are, and conduct yourself in accordance with your dignity.

✠ When you doubt in the accomplishment or fulfillment of any word of prayer, remember that the nature of the word is accomplishment, realisation, and that the Holy Ghost, teaching us to pray for anything as we ought [Romans 8 26][272], is Himself called the Accomplisher. It is He also Who accomplishes our prayer (accomplished by the Spirit). Remember that the word is power. *"With God"*, it is said, *"nothing shall be impossible"* [Luke 1 37][273] The word of the Lord *"shall not return unto Him void"* [Isaiah 55 11][274], but, like rain or snow, it shall water the earth of our hearts, and shall give seed (the fulfillment) to the sower. Even of men people say: "His word has extraordinary power. You see, therefore, that the word is power, spirit, life.

✠ God is a Spirit, an incomplex Being. And in what manner does the Spirit manifest itself? By thought, word and deed. Therefore God, as an incomplex Being, is not composed of a series or of a multitude of thoughts, or of a multitude of words or creations, but He is wholly, in one incomplex thought, God—the Trinity, or, in one incomplex word—the Trinity, or in Persons, united together in one. But He is also wholly in everything that exists, penetrating and filling everything with Himself. For instance, when you say a prayer, He is in every word of it, of it, and like a Holy Fire, penetrates each word—everyone may experience this for himself if he will pray sincerely, fervently, with faith and love. But, especially, He is wholly in the names belonging to Him: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, or the Holy Trinity, or the Lord, the Lord God, the Lord God of Sabbaoth, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Holy Spirit, the Heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth and in His other names. The Angels and the Saints are also near to us in their names, as their names and our faith in them are near to our heart; for they are nothing else but the breath of God, and are *'one spirit with the Lord.'* [Corinth. 6 17][275]

✠ Every word of the Holy Writ, every word of Divine liturgy, of the morning and evening services, every word of the Sacramental prayers and of the other prayers, has in itself the power corresponding to it and contained in it, like the sign of the honourable and life-giving cross. Such

may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.
Ephesians 1 15–23

266 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth. And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat. And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so. And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.
Genesis 1 27–31

267 Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called

the Son of God. And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren. For with God nothing shall be impossible. And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her.
Luke 1 34–38

268 Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid. What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh. But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit. Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body. What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.
1 Corinthians 6 15–20

269 And he asked his father, How long is it ago since this came unto him? And he said, Of a child. And ofttimes it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him: but if thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us. Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth. And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.
Mark 9 21–24

270 Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by his fruit. O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good

grace is present in every word of the Church, on account of the Personal Incarnate Word of God, Who is the Head of the Church, dwelling in the Church. Besides this, every truly good word has in itself the power corresponding to it, owing to the all-filling simple Word of God. With what attention and reverence, with what faith, must we therefore pronounce each word! For the Word is the Creator Himself, God, and through the Word all things were brought into existence from nonexistence.

✠ You are a being endued with speech. Remember that you derive your origin from the word of the Creator of all things and that in union (through faith) with the creative Word, by means of faith, you can yourself be a material and spiritual creator. Believe that by your faith in the creative word of the Father, your own word, too, shall not return to you vain, powerless (when, for instance, you pray to God, the Benefactor, in accordance with the holy Church's direction or the Lord's guidance);, but it shall bring you the necessary for good deeds; believe that through faith in the creative Word you will not be unsuccessful in teaching people either in the' temple during Divine service, or during the celebration of the sacraments in private houses; neither shall your teaching in schools be unsuccessful, but it shall bring you the gift necessary for good deeds; believe you.

✠ Be firmly convinced that every word, especially those pronounced during prayer is realizable, remembering that the author of the word is God the Word, that our God Himself, worshipped in the Holy Trinity, is expressed by the three words or names: The Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; that each word has a corresponding being, or that every word can become being and deed. Therefore reverence the word and value it. Remember that the Son of God, as the Personal Word of God, is always united with the Father and the Holy Ghost, in the same manner as the Father, as the Supreme Wisdom, participates, by His omnipresence, His creative Word, and the Holy Ghost the Accomplisher in the words of Holy Scripture, or in the prayers or in the writings of the most wise Fathers. This is why no word is vain, but has or should have power in itself. Woe to those who speak idly, for they will have to answer for their idle speaking! *'For with God nothing shall be impossible'* [Luke 1 37][276]. Power and accomplishment are, in general, the properties of the word. Such should it also be in the mouths of men.

March 4

If the philosophies of men were able to satisfy man, why did the philosophers **Justin** and **Origen** become Christians? Why did **Basil**, **Chrysostom** and **Gregory**, who in Athens studied all the philosophy of the Greeks, receive baptism? And why did **Blessed Augustine**, who knew the wisdom of both the Greeks and the Romans, throw away all and seek salvation and illumination in the Christian Faith? And **St. Clement of Rome**, who was very wealthy and very learned? And **St. Catherine**, who was from the royal house and knew all the worldly wisdom of the Egyptians? And the young **Crown Prince Ioasaph** in India, who knew all the Indian philosophies? And many, many more who, in philosophy, primarily sought explanations to the puzzles of the world and illumination for their souls, and afterward entered the Church and worshipped the **Lord Christ**?

Hieromonk Seraphim Of Platina

The Weeping Icons

The Miraculous Icons Of The Mother Of God

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Of all the many ways in which the All-holy Mother of God reveals Her mercies to men, there is one that stands out both as being undeniable (for it is a completely "objective" phenomenon) and as touching the heart in a most immediate way. This is the phenomenon of weeping icons, in which images of the Mother of God produce tears that arc exact replicas, on the scale of the icon, of human tears—originating in a corner of the eye and coursing down the side of the face, sometimes as distinct miniature teardrops, sometimes as a flood of tears that moistens the whole face.

America too, so late to receive Holy Orthodoxy, is now the witness of this miraculous phenomenon. Three weeping icons[277] appeared quite suddenly, one after the other, within two weeks in the spring of 1960 among Greek families on Long Island, New York. The striking nature of this twice-repeated sign has drawn considerable attention to these icons, especially among Orthodox believers, but also among those outside the Church. Numerous articles have been written about them in American magazines and newspapers[278], and in whatever cities they have appeared they have attracted large crowds of believers, as well as the simply curious.

The first weeping icon known in America was manifested in March, 1960, to the Greek family of Katsunis, living in Island Park, Long Island, New York. The young wife, standing at her evening prayers one Wednesday, noticed that one of her icons (the Mother of God without the Child) was shedding tears. She called her husband, and the two of them observed the phenomenon in awe. Others learned of it through a neighbor, and from Friday on began flocking to the modest Katsunis apartment. On Saturday the parish priest arrived and celebrated a service before the icon, and on the next day Archbishop Iakovos celebrated a service before it with two priests. Then the icon was removed to the church of St. Paul in Hempstead, where every Wednesday for a year there were services before it. The icon, an 8 × 10 lithograph, had been received by the young couple on their wedding two years before from a nun in Greece.

Four weeks later, in a house just four miles from the Katsunis house, Antonia Kulis had a dream during sleep. Christ appeared to her on the Cross and said: "You will see what will happen on Holy Thursday..." Antonia noticed tears for the first time on Passion Wednesday at about 2:30. The idea had suddenly come to her to burn incense and pray before her icons. She went with the censer into her daughter's room, where the icons were—and froze to the spot, seeing tears in the eyes of the Mother of God. She called her husband, and together they called the priest, Fr. George.

This new weeping icon was also a simple 8 × 10 lithograph, printed in 1938, which had been received by Antonia from her cousin two years before. It was an icon of the Mother of God of Iveron, the original of which is on Mt. Athos. It differed from the earlier weeping icon in that tears came from both eyes and were more abundant. On Great (Passion) Thursday the icon, accompanied by nearly 1000 people, with Archbishop Iakovos at

things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things. But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.
Matthew 12 33–37

271 And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you. Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.
1 Peter 5 4–9

272 For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it. Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God. And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.
Romans 8 24–28

273 Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee,

and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren. For with God nothing shall be impossible. And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her.
Luke 1 34–38

274 For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it. For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree: and it shall be to the LORD for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.
Isaiah 55 8–13

275 And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by his own power. Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid. What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh. But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.
1 Corinthians 6 14–17

the head, was transferred to the same church of St. Paul where the first weeping icon was located; there a paraklis was served before the icon. During the services of Great Friday the flow of tears was especially noticeable. Many times it would increase. The Mother of God wished, as it were, to engrave this sign on the minds of all—even completely cold and sceptical observers. A photograph taken of the icon testified that the flow of tears, hardly noticeable in the beginning, visibly increased the very moment the picture was taken.

The second weeping icon evoked a heightened interest also on the part of scientific investigators. They could only testify to the fact, which, even if it did not make believers of them, they could not deny. An analysis was even made—as was done also with the first icon—of the fluid. It was discovered only that it was not of the nature of human tears. But the miracle continued. The Mother of God as it were paid no attention to these blasphemous displays of human curiosity.

The number of people who came to see and venerate the second weeping icon by far surpassed the already large number that had come to see the first. Now the ever-growing crowds were to be numbered, no longer by hundreds, but by thousands; a never ending line of people extended far outside the church. On Easter Tuesday the late Metropolitan Anastassy, together with clergy of the Russian Church Abroad, came to revere the icon.

In place of the icon which had been placed in church, Archbishop Iakovos gave Antonia another lithograph-icon, that of the Mother of God "of the Passion," so called because of the angels on either side who hold the instruments of our Lord's Passion. Soon thereafter, on May 14, 1960, this new icon in its turn began to weep, and it too was taken to the Greek church in Hempstead. It was there a comparatively short time together with the first two weeping icons, during which time the icons were seen by a large number of people. Soon, however, the Mother of God appeared in a dream to the owner of the icon, saying: "I do not want to be here, take Me away; I want to be in your house."

At the present time the first icon is located in the chapel of the Greek Archdiocese in New York City; the second icon is still in the church of St. Paul in Hempstead; and the third is in the possession of the Kulis family. All three icons have periodically been taken to Orthodox churches, both Greek and Russian, throughout America and have attracted widespread interest and veneration—especially the third icon, that of the Passion, which has shed abundant tears now for over five years.

The fact of the weeping icons is indisputable. Having witnessed it and accepted it, one is inevitably led to ask: what is the significance of this phenomenon? For signs such as these have a meaning in the language of faith which is the means of communication between this world and the other world. The response of devout Orthodox people and clergy who have seen and prayed before the icons points to a single, nearly unanimous interpretation of their meaning. But to corroborate this one must turn to the tradition of the Church, to seek there similar manifestations from the past, and to discover the historical role they played and the reaction to them of contemporary saints, hierarchs, and devout people. As it turns out, the phenomenon, though rare, is by no means without precedent in Church history. From Russian sources alone it has been possible to find nine examples, covering a period of eight centuries, before the most recent weeping icons; and these are doubtless not the only examples. They will be noted here in chronological order.

1. The Mother Of God Of The Sign, Of Novgorod[279]

This icon became celebrated at the time of the siege of Novgorod in the 12th century. St. John, Bishop of Novgorod, was praying for the third night for the deliverance of the city, when from an icon before which he was praying a voice came, ordering him to go to a certain church and take from it the icon of the Mother of God of the Sign, from which was to come the salvation of Novgorod. This was done, and the icon was placed on the city wall with its face to the enemy. A veritable shower of arrows was falling, and suddenly one of these pierced the icon. The icon of itself turned toward the city, and from the eyes of the Mother of God tears poured forth. The holy archpastor took his chasuble and began to collect in it the tears which were dropping from the icon. He exclaimed: "O, most glorious wonder—from dry wood flow tears! By this, O Queen, Thou givest us a sign that Thou art praying to Thy Son and our God for the deliverance of the city." The whole city began to pray fervently. An inexplicable terror fell upon the enemy; they were enveloped by a dense darkness and turned on each other. In this way the city was saved on February 25, 1170.

2. The Hodigitria Of Cherska (Or Of Pskov)[280]

In the year 1420 a terrible epidemic broke out in the province of Pskov. The people in despair sought consolation in prayer to God and His Most Holy Mother. On July 16, in a church in the village of Cherska, there was a great sign: from the eyes of an icon of the Hodigitria Mother of God there flowed tears. News of this miracle spread quickly, and multitudes flocked to venerate the newly-glorified icon. When, under orders from the Prince of Pskov, the icon was transported to that city, the miracle was repeated as the Prince came to meet the icon, and the triumphal procession was stopped and a moleben of thanksgiving celebrated on the spot. The icon was then placed permanently in the Holy Trinity Cathedral of Pskov.

3. The Mother Of God Of Ilyin-Chernigov[281]

This icon was painted in 1658 by a monk, and was located in a monastery near Chernigov. For eight days in the year 1662 (April 16–24), the icon wept, of which fact the whole population of Chernigov were witnesses. St. Dimitry of Rostov testified that "on this miracle everyone in the city of Chernigov looked with great fear." An historian of that time, Velichko, explained the reason for the weeping thus: By this means the Mother of God was revealing Her special love and mercy to believers who venerate Her icon, and also Her compassion for the miserable condition of the Orthodox Little Russians, who were suffering the misfortunes of civil war, captivity, and tyranny. In the same year the Tartars attacked Chernigov and laid it waste; here, apparently, was the specific reason for the tears of the Mother of God. The monks heard about this attack in advance and hid in the cave of St. Anthony of Pechersk; the Tartars destroyed much of the monastery but did not find the monks nor do the icon any harm.

4. The Kazan Icon Of Kaplunovka[282]

This icon was revealed to a devout priest in the village of Kaplunovka, district of Kharkov, in the year 1689. In obedience to a dream which he had had several nights before, he bought from the third of three traveling icon painters the eighth icon he offered, one of the Kazan Mother of God. He placed the icon in his room and kept a candle lit before it day and night. In the night of the third Sunday afterwards, the Mother of God appeared to him in a dream and said: "Do not force Me to be in your room, but take Me to My church!" The church in Kaplunovka was dedicated to the Birth of the Mother of God. On awaking he went to the icon and discovered that tears were pouring from the eyes of the Mother of God. He immediately called the people and told them about the icon; and after a moleben had been served before it, the icon was triumphantly transferred to the church, where it was glorified by many miracles. Twenty years later the icon attained national significance when the Swedes passed through Kaplunovka in their invasion of Russia; Tsar Peter ordered the priest to travel with the miraculous icon in his army, and before the Battle of Poltava he prayed fervently before the icon. After the Russian victory the icon was taken to Moscow and then returned to Kaplunovka, Tsar Peter adorned it with a riza and a shrine.

5. The Kazan Icon Of Tambov[283]

When St. Pitirim was Bishop of Tambov, he had a difficult time: the moral character of the city was low, and he had to fight much especially with new arrivals in the city. With this in view he had placed upon the two chief gates of the city two superb icons: one of the Crucifixion, and one of the Kazan Mother of God. The latter icon had been in the old Tambov Cathedral and had become glorified by a remarkable miracle. According to the Tambov Annals, "on December 6, 1695, during the all-night vigil in the wooden cathedral church, tears flowed from the eyes of the Kazan Mother of God..." It was probably after this miracle that the icon was ordered placed upon the city gate for the

276 Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren. For with God nothing shall be impossible. And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her.
Luke 1 34–38

277 *Orthodox Russia*, 1960 (nos. 6, 8, 16, 19)

278 See, for example, *Life*, May 2, 1960; the *New York Journal American*, April 19, 1960, p. 8.

279 St. Dimitri of Rostov, *Lives of the Saints* (Sept.).

280 E. Poselyanin, *The Mother of God*

281 Ibid.

282 Ibid.

283 Ibid.

veneration of all. Many began coming to the icon to entreat help in their afflictions; veneration of the icon increased, though it apparently did not weep again, and there were healings.

284 *Ibid.*

285 Bp. Nikodim of Belgorod, *Russian Podvizhniki of the 19th and 20th Centuries* (July, p. 537; April, pp. 104-5)

286 E. Poselyanin, *The Mother of God*

287 Archpriest Nicholas Dombrovsky, in *Orthodox Russia*, 1950 (no. 10).

6. The Sokolsky Icon Of Roumania[284]

This icon of the Mother of God was located in the church of the Orthodox Theological Academy at the Sokolsky Monastery in Roumania. After the Liturgy in the seminary church on February 1, 1854, it was noticed that this icon was weeping. The rector of the seminary. Bishop Philaret Skriban, was among the witnesses of this miracle. He took the icon out of its frame, looked at it carefully, wiped the traces of the tears off with a cloth, and replaced the icon. He then asked all to leave, and he locked the church. When the rector, together with the teachers and seminarians, came to church for vespers several hours later, all were struck by the same miraculous flow of tears from the eyes of the Mother of God. The rector immediately served a moleben and acathist before the icon. Soon all of Roumania knew of the miracle and began streaming to the monastery to venerate the icon. News of it spread throughout Russia also, and found a place in a chapter ("God's People") of Tolstoy's novel War and Peace—where it received a blasphemous treatment by the author, as ever unwilling to accept God's grace. The miraculous flow of tears occurred sometimes daily, and sometimes with an interval of two, three, or four days. Many were thus able to sec the very miracle of weeping, and those who did not at least could see the traces left by the tears. Even sceptics became convinced of the miracle. A certain colonel was sent by the commanding officer of the Austrian occupation force (during the Crimean War) to investigate the rumored miracle, and to his astonishment witnessed the actual flow of tears. An important testimony of the miracle was offered by Bishop Melchisedek of Romansk, one of its first witnesses. Thirty-five years after the event, he spoke of how he had long pondered the question of the meaning of the tears of the Mother of God. He came to the conclusion that such weeping icons had existed also in ancient times, and that such an event always foretold a severe trial for the Church of Christ and for the nation. History justified this conclusion in the case of the Roumanian weeping icon. During the Crimean War the Principality of Moldavia was occupied by Austrian troops and subjected to severe trials. The Sokolsky Monastery, in particular, had a sad future: this formerly great religious center of Roumania, serving for a hundred years as a seedbed of spiritual culture, was suppressed, the seminary moved elsewhere, and the monks dispersed.

7. The Smolensk Icon Of The Nizhegorod Caves Monastery[285]

In the life of the remarkable and holy starets. Hieromonk Mardary, there is the following incident: In the year 1854 a poor widow whose daughter was sick came to the starets to take oil from the lamp that burned constantly before the icon of the Smolensk Mother of God in the monastery church. The starets went with her to the church—and they saw tears streaming from the eyes of the Mother of God. Astonished, they prayed a long time before the icon without understanding what the tears signified. The widow wiped the tears from the icon with a cloth and brought it home together with the oil; the tears and the oil together healed the sick girl. The starets meanwhile told a monk about the tears and remarked: "This signifies something extraordinary; is everything all right in Petersburg?" Within less than a week word was received of the news that brought sorrow to all Russia—the reverses of the Crimean War.

8. The Tikhvin Icon Of Mount Athos[286]

This icon is located behind the altar in the Skete of the Prophet Elijah on Mt. Athos. On Thursday of the second week of Lent, February 17, 1877, after the Lenten hours had been read, seven monks who remained in church saw plain traces of tears coming from the right eye of the icon and streaming down to the frame, where they collected; from the left eye, in the sight of all, a single large teardrop rolled down. The witnesses examined the icon carefully, wiped off the tears,

and left the church, locking the door behind them. Three hours later the monks returned for vespers, and on the Tikhvin icon they again saw traces of tears and, in the left eye, a teardrop. The monks again wiped the tears from the icon, and after this the miracle was not repeated. In this weeping icon the monks saw a miraculous sign of the mercy of the Queen of Heaven, and they established a yearly feast in honor of the icon on February 17.

9. The Mother Of God Of Pruzhen, Poland[287]

One of the most significant events of our times occurred on April 9, 1934, in the St. Alexander Nevsky Cathedral in the city of Pruzhen. It was Easter Friday. Tears began to flow from the eyes of the Mother of God represented as standing beside Christ on the Cross. This extraordinary miracle was witnessed not only by Orthodox believers, but also by Catholics, sectarians, and even unbelievers. They all testified of this fact also before a special investigating committee sent by the bishop of the Polessk diocese. This committee, after a thorough investigation, acknowledged the indisputability of the miracle. News of the miracle spread rapidly through the whole diocese and the surrounding area. Pilgrimages were started. People flocked by the thousands to the wonderworking icon the whole summer of 1934, and church processions to the icon continued in the following years.

These examples of weeping icons in the history of the Orthodox Church permit an historical perspective of the contemporary weeping icons and allow one to make certain general statements about them. They are not new to Orthodox experience, but they have been extremely rare, and to very few has it been granted to sec the tears of the Mother of God more than once in a lifetime. Yet the response to them on the part of Orthodox believers is ever one and the same, coming as it docs from the Christian consciousness that is developed in one according to the depth of his participation in the life of the Church.

By Her tears the Mother of God shows Her nearness to men, Her concern for them, and the power and warmth of Her prayer for them. Her intercession for the human race becomes, as it were, visible in Her tears. Seeing this miraculous sign Orthodox Christians are themselves moved to fervent prayer, the response of the first witnesses of the weeping icons throughout the centuries has always been immediately to celebrate a service of prayer before them, and the icons become after this a center of pilgrimage.

But beside the general purpose of calling Christians to prayer, the weeping icons have almost invariably served a more specific function. They have been a sign to believers, sometimes of a single city, sometimes of a whole province or nation, of an impending misfortune affecting all, the rareness of the sign being an indication of the extraordinary character of the event it portends. The tears of the Mother of God are a kind of final warning of the impending catastrophe-which is always, as Orthodox Christians well know, sent by God as a chastisement for sin and a final call to sincere repentance and fervent prayer. The outcome is not always certain Often, indeed, the weeping icons have been followed by disaster; but occasionally, after great peril, disaster has been averted. Here, as in all God's dealings with men, the freedom of man plays an important role; the fervency and depth of man s response to the heavenly tears help to determine whether the misfortune will be averted.

Of all the weeping icons, however, the new weeping icons of America are the most extraordinary. One weeping icon was followed by a second, and then by a third; and there have been tears, not for a day or a week, but—from the third icon—for over five years. If the weeping icons in general have been a sign to believers, these newest ones are unmistakably so. What precisely they portend no one, of course, can say; but whatever it is, it evidently concerns all Orthodox people in America, and perhaps the whole nation as well. Certainly there is much in America today that could call forth Divine chastisement. In many Orthodox Churches in America the departure from traditional Orthodox faith and practice has advanced so far as to make union with the apostate Church of Rome a logical next step, and indications are that this step will not be long in coming; multitudes of Orthodox believers relax the disciplined spiritual life prescribed by the Church in order to follow the increasingly self-indulgent example of the American populace; and this same populace gives no indication of seeing in its own still-free

land a last bulwark against the soul-devouring monster of Communism, but rather abandons its last vestige of Christian conscience to lead a life inspired by indifference and atheism, thus hastening the advent of the universal atheist regime.

It is not America alone that has witnessed the tears of the Mother of God in our own day. In New Zealand a photograph of the Tikhvin Mother of God of Mt. Athos, which itself wept in 1877, began to weep in June, 1956[288], and has continued to weep periodically since then; this icon was received in 1952 from a monk on the Holy Mountain. And in Greece, in the village of Ersova near Mt. Athos, at about the same time a lithograph icon of the Mother of God[289] wept for forty consecutive days such copious tears that they were collected in bottles. Perhaps these signs in distant continents arc related to the American weeping icons, and they all together portend some event of concern to the entire world. Some monks on Mt. Athos and elsewhere believe they refer to an event for which, as numerous other signs indicate, the world would seem at last to be ripe: the birth of Antichrist.

What is certain is that these tears of the Mother of God speak directly to the heart of every Orthodox believer, calling all to repentance, amendment of life, and a return to Orthodox faith and tradition in their fullness.

288 *Orthodox Russia,* 1962 (no.4)

289 *Orthodox Russia,* 1960 (no. 10).

March 25

Abba Athanasius was once asked: *"How is it that the Son is equal to the Father?"* He answered: *"Just as there are two eyes but one sight."* The response is admirable. To this we can add: just as there are two ears but one hearing. Similarly for all three Divine Hypostases: just as there are three candles but there is one and the same light.

Hieromonk Seraphim Of Platina

Orthodoxy And The Religion Of The Future

Can The Orthodox Church Enter A Dialogue With Non-Christian Religions?

The Orthodox Word, Vol. 7, No. 4 (39), July-August 1971, pp. 154-66, 174-79

II. Hinduism's Assault Upon Christianity

All the gods of the pagans are demons.
Psalm 96:5[290]

The following article comes from the experience of a woman who, after attending high school in a Roman Catholic content, practiced Hinduism for twenty years until finally, by God's grace, she was converted to the Orthodox Faith, finding the end of her search for truth in the Russian Church Outside of Russia. She currently resides in the San Francisco Bay area, and for various reasons prefers to remain anonymous. May her words serve to open the eyes of those Orthodox Christians who might be tempted to follow the blind "liberal" theologians who are now making their appearance even in the Orthodox Church, and whose answer to the assault of neo-paganism upon the Church of Christ is to conduct a "dialogue" with its wizards and join them in worshipping the very gods of the pagans.

1. The Attractions Of Hinduism

I WAS JUST sixteen when two events set the course of my life. I came to Dominican Catholic Convent in San Rafael (California) and encountered Christianity for the first time. The same year I also encountered Hinduism in the person of a Hindu monk, a Swami, who was shortly to become my guru or teacher. A battle had begun, but I wasn't to understand this for nearly twenty years.

At the convent I was taught the basic truths of Christianity. Here lie the strength of the humble and a snare to the proud. St. James wrote truly: *God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble* (4:6)[291]. And how proud I was; I wouldn't accept original sin and I wouldn't accept hell. And I had many, many arguments against them. One Sister of great charity gave me the key when she said: "Pray for the gift of faith." But already the Swami's

290 O sing unto the LORD a new song: sing unto the LORD, all the earth. Sing unto the LORD, bless his name; shew forth his salvation from day to day. Declare his glory among the heathen, his wonders among all people. For the LORD is great, and greatly to be praised: he is to be feared above all gods. For all the gods of the nations are idols: but the LORD made the heavens. Honour and majesty are before him: strength and beauty are in his sanctuary. Give unto the LORD, O ye kindreds of the people, give unto the LORD glory and strength. **Psalm 96:1-7**

291 Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts. Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God. Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy? But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded. **James 4:3-8**

training had taken hold, and I thought it debasing to beg anyone, even God, for anything. But much later, I remembered what she had said. Years later the seed of Christian faith that had been planted in me emerged from an endless sea of despair.

In time the nature of the books that I brought back to school with me, all in plain covered wrappers, was discovered. Books like the *Bhagavad Gita*, the *Upanishads*, the *Vedantasara*, the *Ashtavakra Samhita*... In part my secret was out, but nothing much was said. No doubt the Sisters thought it would pass, as indeed most of the intellectual conceits of young girls do. But one bold nun told me the truth. It's a very unpopular truth and one that is rarely heard today. She said that I would go to hell if I died in Hinduism, after knowing the truth of Christianity. Saint Peter put it this way: *For by whom a man is overcome, of the same also he is the slave. For if flying from the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they be again entangled in them and overcome, their latter state is become unto them worse than the former. For it had been better them not to have known the way of justice, than after they have known it, to turn back from that holy commandment which was delivered to them* [2 Peter 2:19-21]. How I despised that Sister for her bigotry. But if she were alive today I would thank her with all my heart. What she told me nagged, as truth will, and it was to lead me finally to the fullness of Holy Orthodoxy.

The important thing that I got at the convent was a measuring stick, and one day I would use it to discover Hinduism a fraud.

The situation has changed so much since I was in school. What was an isolated case of Hinduism has developed into an epidemic. Now one must have an intelligent understanding of Hindu dogmatics if one is to prevent young Christians from committing spiritual suicide when they encounter Eastern religions.

The appeal of Hinduism is full spectrum; there are blandishments for every faculty and appeals to every weakness, but particularly to pride. And being very proud, even at sixteen, it was to these that I first fell prey. Original sin, hell, and the problem of pain troubled me. I'd never taken them seriously before I came to the convent. Then, the Swami presented an "intellectually satisfying" alternative for every uncomfortable Christian dogma. Hell was after all, only a temporary state of the soul brought on by our own bad karma (past actions) in this or in a former life. And, of course, a finite cause couldn't have an infinite effect. Original sin was marvelously transmuted into Original Divinity. This was my birthright, and nothing I could ever do would abrogate this glorious end. I was Divine. I was God: "the Infinite Dreamer, dreaming finite dreams."

There were several ways to clear up the problem of pain in the world. If you were a dualist (i.e., a created being) or a qualified monist (i.e., an apparently created being), you could hold that God had nothing to do with it. Pain was simply the result of wrong thoughts and actions. But if you were a monist (they're called Advaitins or Vedantins) you had a really elegant philosophical system to take care of pain. In a nutshell, pain was maya or illusion. It had no real existence—and what's more, the Advaitin could claim to prove it!

In another area, Hinduism appeals to the very respectable error of assuming that man is perfectible: through education (in their terms, the guru system) and through evolution (or karma and reincarnation). An argument is also made from the standpoint of cultural relativity; this has now assumed such respectability that it's a veritable sin (with those who don't believe in sin) to challenge relativity of any sort. What could be more reasonable, they say, than different nations and peoples worshipping God differently? God, after all, is God, and the variety in modes of worship make for enrichment in religion "writ large."

But perhaps the most generally compelling attraction is pragmatism. The entire philosophical construct of Hinduism is buttressed by the practical religious instructions given to the disciple by his guru. With these practices the disciple is invited to verify the philosophy by his own experience. Nothing has to be accepted on faith. And contrary to popular notions, there aren't any mysteries—just a tremendous amount of esoteric material—so there simply is no need for faith. You are told: "Try it, and see if it works." This pragmatic approach is supremely tempting to the Western mind. It appears so very "scientific." But almost every student falls right into a kind of pragmatic fallacy: i.e., if the practices work (and they do in fact work), he believes that the system is true, and implicitly, that it is good. This, of course, doesn't follow. All that can really be said is: if they work, then they work. But missing his point, you can understand how a little psychic experience gives the poor student a great deal of conviction.

This brings me to the last blandishment that I'll mention, which is "spiritual experiences." These are psychic and or diabolic in origin. But who among the practitioners has any way of distinguishing

delusion from true spiritual experience? They have no measuring stick. But don't think that what they see, hear, smell and touch in these experiences are the result of simple mental aberration. They aren't. They are what our Orthodox tradition calls prelest. It's an important word, because it refers to the exact condition of a person having Hindu "spiritual experiences." There is no precise equivalent to the term prelest in the English lexicon. It covers the whole range of false spiritual experiences: from simple illusion and beguilement to actual possession. In every case the counterfeit is taken as genuine and the overall effect is an accelerated growth of pride. A warm, comfortable sense of special importance settles over the person in prelest, and this compensates for all his austerities and pain[292].

In his first Epistle, Saint John warns the early Christians: *Dearly beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits if they be of God ...* [1 John 4:1][293]

Saint Gregory of Sinai was careful to instruct his monks on the dangers of these experiences: "All around, near to beginners and the self-willed, the demons are wont to spread the nets of thoughts and pernicious fantasies and prepare moats for their downfall..." A monk asked him: "What is a man to do when the demon takes the form of an angel of light?" The Saint replied: "In this case a man needs great power of discernment to discriminate rightly between good and evil. So in your heedlessness, do not be carried away too quickly by what you see, but be weighty (not easy to move) and, carefully testing everything, accept the good and reject the evil. Always you must test and examine, and only afterwards believe. Know that the actions of grace are manifest, and the demon, in spite of his transformations, cannot produce them: namely, meekness, friendliness, humility, hatred of the world, cutting off passions and lust—which are the effects of grace. Works of the demons are: arrogance, conceit, intimidation and all evil. By such actions you will be able to discern whether the light shining in your heart is of God or of satan. Lettuce looks like mustard, and vinegar in color like wine; but when you taste them the palate discerns and defines the difference between each. In the same way the soul, if it has discernment, can discriminate by mental taste the gifts of the Holy Spirit from the fantasies and illusions of satan."

The misguided or proud spiritual aspirant is most vulnerable to *prelest*. And the success and durability of Hinduism depends very largely on this false mysticism. How very appealing it is to drug using young people, who have already been initiated into these kinds of experiences. The last few years have seen the flowering and proliferating of Swamis. They saw their opportunity for fame and wealth in this ready-made market. And they took it.

292 Further on prelest: see *The Orthodox Word*, 1965, no. 4, pp. 155ff.

293 Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world. Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them. We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.
1 John 4:1-6

2. A War Of Dogma

Today Christianity is taking the thrusts of a foe that is all but invisible to the faithful. And if it can, it will pierce to the heart before declaring its name. The enemy is Hinduism, and the war being waged is a war of dogma.

When Vedanta Societies were founded in this country, around the turn of the century, first efforts were directed to establishing that there *was no real difference* between Hinduism and Christianity. Not only was there no conflict, but a good Christian would be a better Christian by studying and practicing the Vedanta; he would understand the real Christianity,

In early lectures, the Swamis attempted to show that those ideas which seemed peculiar to Christianity—like the Logos and the Cross—really had their origin in India. And those ideas which seemed peculiar to Hinduism—like rebirth, transmigration of the soul and samadhi (or trance) were also to be found in Christian scripture—when it was properly interpreted.

This kind of bait caught many sincere but misguided Christians. The early push was against what might be called "sectarian" dogmas, and for a so called scientific religion based on a comparative study of all religions. Primary stress was always on this: there is no such thing as difference. All is One. All differences are just on the surface; they are apparent or relative, not real. All this is clear from published lectures that were delivered in the early 1900s. Today we are in great danger because this effort was so very successful.

Now common parlance has "dogma" a derisive term. But this scorn could not have originated with those who know that it refers to the most precious heritage of the Church. However, once the bad connotation became fixed, the timid, who never like to be associated with the unpopular, began to speak of "rigid dogma," which is redundant

294 So he called every one of his lord's debtors unto him, and said unto the first, How much owest thou unto my lord? And he said, An hundred measures of oil. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and sit down quickly, and write fifty. Then said he to another, And how much owest thou? And he said, An hundred measures of wheat. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and write fourscore. And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light. And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations. Luke 16:5-9

but bespeaks disapproval. So the attitude was insidiously absorbed from "broad minded" critics who either didn't know that dogma states what Christianity is, or simply didn't like what Christianity is all about.

The resulting predisposition of many Christians to back down when faced with the accusation of holding to dogma has given the Hindus no small measure of help. And aid from within had strategic advantages.

The incredible fact is that few see that the very power that would overturn Christian dogma is itself nothing but an opposing system of dogmas. The two cannot blend or "enrich" each other because they are wholly antithetical.

If Christians are persuaded to throw out (or what is tactically more clever) to alter their dogmas to suit the demand for a more up-to-date or "universal" Christianity, they have lost everything, because what is valued by Christians and by Hindus is immediately derived from their dogmas. *And Hindu dogmas are a direct repudiation of Christian dogmas*. This leads us to a staggering conclusion: *What Christians believe to be evil, Hindus believe to be good,* and conversely: *What Hindus believe to be evil, Christians believe to be good.*

The real struggle lies in this: that the ultimate sin for the Christian, is the ultimate realization of good for the Hindu. Christians have always acknowledged pride as the basic sin—the fountainhead of all sin. And Lucifer is the archetype when he says: "I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God. I will ascend above the clouds; I will be like the Most High." On a lower level, it is pride that turns even man's virtues into sins. But for the Hindu in general, and the Advaitin or Vedantan in particular, the only sin is not to believe in yourself and in Humanity as God Himself. In the words of Swami Vivekananda (who was the foremost modern advocate of Vedanta): "You do not yet understand India! We Indians are Man worshippers after all. Our God is Man!" The doctrine of mukti or salvation consists in this: that "Man is to become Divine by realizing the Divine."

From this one can see the dogmas of Hinduism and Christianity standing face to face, each defying the other on the nature of God, the nature of man and the purpose of human existence.

The Communists have seen their opportunity in disseminating this kind of Hindu dogma. On my last trip to India, the Secretary of what is probably the most influential religious organization in India—the Ramakrishna Order of Monks—told me that the Kremlin had asked him to send a Swami to Russia to teach them Advaita Vedanta. And he sent a Swami—with much satisfaction.

The question may be asked: Has atheistic Communism understood at last that the nature of man is such that he must worship something? Apart from the authorized and Communist dominated Orthodox Church in Russia, there is a very substantial underground or catacomb Church. This internally free Orthodox Church is being persecuted just like the early Church under Nero.

Now a God to whom man, the creature, owes his very existence, is clearly a danger to the Communist establishment. But Advaita Vedanta is consistent in every way with their ideology. Let man worship man—and the very base of atheistic Communism is reinforced. Let God assume the form of man or humanity, and there is no longer a question of *religion* competing with Communism. Religion becomes part and parcel of the atheistic structure.

If Advaita Vedanta were successfully promoted in Communist Russia, the advantages would be considerable, both in terms of inner consolidation and by extending their base of friendly rapport with "free thinking" Westerners who have already been affected by Vedantic infiltration into Christianity. Truly, *the children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light* [St. Luke 16:8][294].

At a symposium of religions held in Chicago in 1969, Father Robert Campbell, a Dominican priest and theologian, said: "I know that the great Swami Vivekananda would himself be in favor of most of the trends in the direction of liberal Christianity; because his teaching was: 'Don't be concerned about doctrines or dogmas or churches or temples'—and the liberal Christian would echo these sentiments 100%."

This priest went on to say: "Swami told us that the old religions said he was an atheist who did not believe in God, but that the new religion tells us that he is an atheist who does not believe in himself and in mankind. Now this attitude will be echoed wholeheartedly by the humanistic, modernistic Christian approach."

You see how great a lie it is to say that dogma doesn't matter. It is dogma alone that provides the basis for Christian values, and it is just *not possible to teach Christianity without teaching dogma*. In a word, it prevents man—full of his own conceits

and sloppy thinking—from redesigning the Church in his own image. This Dominican theologian took the "no dogma" bait hook, line and sinker, and unbeknown to himself, he was caught by another religion

Even those who are concerned by the inroads of the antidogmatists, have scarcely begun to realize the implications of this trend away from dogma. They don't know how completely and quickly the adversary can take them over, making white into black and black into white. Would this priest have spoken so well of Swami Vivekananda's teaching if he had known that the Swami also said: "I love terror for its own sake, despair for its own sake, misery for its own sake. Fight always. Fight on, though always in defeat. That's the ideal. That's the ideal!"?

Surely, you will say, if he had read this diabolical speech or knew what Vivekananda stood for, he could not have endorsed the Swami. But to this I reply: you are innocent of the corrupting power of Hinduism. With all of the basically sound training that I received at the convent, twenty years in Hinduism brought me to the very doors of the love of evil. You see, in India "God" is also worshipped as Evil, in the form of the goddess Kali. But about this I will speak in the next section, on Hindu practices

This is the end in store when there is no more Christian dogma. I say this from personal experience, because I have worshipped Kali in India and in this country. And She who is Satan is no joke. *If you give up the Living God, the throne is not going to remain empty.* And you give up the Living God by giving up Christianity. And Christian dogma is nothing more and nothing less than a declaration of the truths of Christianity.

One may wonder how this could ever happen. Who gives up good for evil wittingly? There's the rub; it doesn't happen wittingly. It happens in a very ordered, rational, cerebral way.

Hinduism actually consists of a philosophical system (more accurately six systems), a number of practices, and an enormous mass of esoterica. Hinduism is the numberless permutations of these elements. As a result, trying to understand just what Hinduism is, is quite a little like trying to hold on to a greased pig, until you learn the ropes. At base there is a spinal structure in Hinduism, and it is Advaita Vedanta (or monism). This is the Enemy, and it is a seductive one. It is an elegant philosophy, tight and, for the inexpert philosopher, very difficult to crack. The practioners of Advaita Vedanta, however, don't mind moving from their system to another, whenever they're in an intellectual bind. The difficulty is, you have to know their system cold to see what they are doing—and this takes a long time and a lot of study. When you do finally see it clearly, it's a bad joke. The philosophy, the pompous Emperor, is stark naked. The Emperor has no clothes because the Emperor is just another human construct—it isn't religion at all. Philosophy, after all, is only philosophy. And similarly, the psychic experiences that result from the practice of the Vedanta have nothing to do with religion

3. Hindu Places And Practices

In 1956 I did field work with headhunters in the Philippines. My interest was in primitive religion—particularly in what is termed an "unacculturated" area—where there had been few missionaries. When I arrived in Ifugao (that's the name of the tribe), I didn't believe in black magic; when I left, I did. An Ifugao priest (a munbaki) named Talupa became my best friend and informant. In time I learned that he was famous for his skill in the black art. He took me to the baki, which is a ceremony of ritualistic magic that occurred almost every night during the harvest season. A dozen or so priests gathered in a hut and the night was spent invoking deities and ancestors, drinking rice wine and making sacrifices to the two small images known as bulol. They were washed in chicken blood, which had been caught in a dish and used to divine the future before it was used on the images. They studied the blood for the size and number of bubbles in it, the time it took to coagulate: also, the color and configuration of the chicken's organs gave them information. Each night I dutifully took notes. But this was just the beginning. I won't elaborate on Ifugao magic; suffice it to say that by the time I left, I had seen such a variety and quantity of supernatural occurrences that any scientific explanation was visually impossible. If I had been predisposed to believe anything when I arrived, it was that magic had a wholly natural explanation. Also, let me say that I don't frighten very easily. But the fact is that I left Ifugao because I saw that their rituals not only worked, but they had worked on me—at least twice.

I say all this so that what I say about Hindu practices and places of worship will not seem incredible, the product of a "heated brain."

Eleven years after the Ifugao episode, I made a pilgrimage to the Cave of Amarnath, deep in the Himalayas. Hindu tradition has it the most sacred place of Siva worship, the place where he manifests himself to his devotees and grants boons. It is a long and difficult journey over the Mahaguna, a 14000 foot pass, and across a glacier; so there was plenty of time to worship him mentally on the way, especially since the boy who led the pack pony didn't speak any English, and I didn't speak any Hindi. This time I was predisposed to believe that the god whom I had worshipped and meditated on for years would graciously manifest himself to me.

The Siva image in the cave is itself a curiosity: an ice image formed by dripping water. It waxes and wanes with the moon. When it is full moon, the natural image reaches the ceiling of the cave—about 15 feet—and by the dark of the moon almost nothing of it remains. And so it waxes and wanes each month. To my knowledge, no one has explained this phenomenon. I approached the cave at an auspicious time, when the image had waxed full. I was soon to worship my god with green coconut, incense, red and white pieces of cloth, nuts, raisins and sugar—all the ritually prescribed items. I entered the cave with tears of devotion. What happened then is hard to describe. The place was vibrant—just like an Ifugao hut with baki in full swing. Stunned to find it a place of inexplicable wrongness, I left retching before the priest could finish making my offering to the great ice image.

The facade of Hinduism had cracked when I entered the Siva Cave, but it was still some time before I broke free. During the interim. I searched for something to support the collapsing edifice, but I found nothing. In retrospect, it seems to me that we often know something is really bad, long before we can really believe it. This applies to Hindu "spiritual practices" quite as much as it does to the so called "holy places."

When a student is initiated by the guru, he is given a Sanskrit mantra, (a personal magic formula) and specific religious practices. These are entirely esoteric and exist in the oral tradition. You won't find them in print and you are very unlikely to learn about them from an initiate, because of the strong negative sanctions which are enforced to protect this secrecy. In effect the guru invites his disciple to prove the philosophy by his own experience. The point is, these practices do in fact work. The student may get powers or "siddhis." These are things like reading minds, power to heal or destroy, to produce objects, to tell the future and so on—the whole gamut of deadly psychic parlor tricks. But far worse than this, he invariably falls into a state of prelest, where he takes delusion for reality. He has "spiritual experiences" of unbounded sweetness and peace. He has visions of deities and of light. (One might recall that Lucifer himself can appear as an angel of light.) By "delusion" I don't mean that he doesn't really experience these things; I mean rather that they are not from God. There is, of course, the philosophical construct that supports every experience, so the practices and the philosophy sustain each other and the system becomes very tight.

Actually, Hinduism is not so much an intellectual pursuit as a system of practices, and these are quite literally—black magic. That is, if you do x, you get y: a simple contract. But the terms are not spelled out and rarely does a student ask where the experiences originate or who is extending him credit—in the form of powers and "beautiful" experiences. It's the classical Faustian situation, but what the practitioner doesn't know is that *the price may well be his immortal soul.*

There's a vast array of practices—practices to suit every temperament. The chosen deity may be with form: a god or goddess; or formless: the Absolute Brahman. The relationship to the chosen Ideal also varies—it may be that of a child, mother, father, friend, beloved, servant or, in the case of Advaita Vedanta, the "relationship" is identity. At the time of initiation the guru gives his disciple a mantra and this determines the path he will follow and the practices he will take up. The guru also dictates how the disciple will live his everyday life. In the Vedanta (or monistic system) single disciples are not to marry; all their powers are to be directed towards success in the practices. Nor is a sincere disciple a meat eater, because meat blunts the keen edge of perception. The guru is literally regarded as God Himself—he is the disciple's Redeemer.

Saint Paul seemed to be addressing himself to this very situation when he wrote: *Now the Spirit manifestly saith, that in the last times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to spirits of error, and doctrines of devils, speaking lies in hypocrisy, and having their conscience seared, forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving by the faithful, and by them that have known the truth* [1 Tim. 4:1–3].

At base, the many "spiritual" exercises derive from only a few root practices. I'll just skim over them

First, there's idolatry. It may be the worship of an image or a picture, with offerings of light, camphor, incense, water and sweets. The image may be fanned with a yak tail, bathed, dressed and put to bed. This sounds very childish, but it is prudent not to underestimate the psychic experiences which they can elicit. Vedantic idolatry takes the form of self-worship—either mentally or externally, with all the ritualistic props. A common aphoristic saying in India epitomizes this self-worship. It is *So Ham, So Ham*, or "I am He, I am He."

Then there's Japa, or the repetition of the Sanskrit mantra given to the disciple at his initiation. In effect, it's the chanting of a magic formula.

Pranayama consists in breathing exercises used in conjunction with Japa. There are other practices which are peculiar to the Tantra or worship of God as Mother, the female principle, power, energy, the principle of evolution and action. They're referred to as the five Ms. They're overtly evil and rather sick-making, so I won't describe them. But they, too, have found their way to this country. Swami Vivekananda prescribed this brand of Hinduism along with the Vedanta. He said: "I worship the Terrible! It is a mistake to hold that with all men pleasure is the motive. Quite as many are born to seek after pain. Let us worship the Terror for Its own sake. How few have dared to worship Death, or Kali! Let us worship Death!" Again, the Swami's words on the goddess Kali: "There are some who scoff at the existence of Kali. Yet today She is out there amongst the people. They are frantic with fear, and the soldiery have been called to deal out death. Who can say that God does not manifest Himself as Evil as well as Good? But only the Hindu dares worship Him as the Evil."[295]

The great pity is that this one-pointed practice of evil is carried on in the firm conviction that it's good. And the salvation that is vainly sought through arduous self-effort in Hinduism can only be wrought by God through Christian self-effacement.

295 *Editors' note*: Few, even of those most desirous of entering into "dialogue" with Eastern religions and of expressing their basic religious unity with them, have any at all precise conception of the pagan religious practices and beliefs from whose tyranny the blessed and light yoke of Christ has liberated mankind. The goddess Kali, one of the most popular of Hindu deities, is most commonly depicted in the midst of a riot of blood and carnage, skulls and severed heads hanging from her neck, her tongue grotesquely protruding from her mouth thirsting for more blood; she is appeased in Hindu temples by bloody offerings of goats (Swami Vivekananda justifies this: "Why not a little blood to complete the picture?"). Of her Swami Vivekananda, as recorded by his disciple 'Sister Njvedita,' said further: "I believe that she guides me in every little thing that I do, and does with me what she will," and at every step he was conscious of her presence as if she were a person in the room with him. He invoked her: "Come, O Mother, come! for Terror is thy name." and it was his religious ideal "to become one with the Terrible forevermore." Is this, as Metropolitan Georges Khodre tries to persuade us, to be accepted as an example of the "authentically spiritual life of the unbaptized," a part of the spiritual "riches" which we are to take from the non-Christian religions? Or is it not rather a proof of the Psalmist's words: *The gods of the pagans are demons?*

4. Evangelizing The West

In 1893 an unknown Hindu monk arrived at the Parliament of Religions in Chicago. He was Swami Vivekananda, whom I have mentioned already. He made a stunning impression on those who heard him, both by his appearance—beturbaned and robed in orange and crimson—and by what he said. He was immediately lionized by high society in Boston and New York. Philosophers at Harvard were mightily impressed. And it wasn't long until he had gathered a hard core of disciples who supported him and his grandiose dream: the evangelizing of the Western world by Hinduism, and more particularly, by Vedantic (or monistic) Hinduism. Vedanta Societies were established in the large cities of this country and in Europe. But these centers were only a part of his work. More important was introducing *Vedantic ideas into the bloodstream of academic thinking*. Dissemination was the goal. It mattered little to Vivekananda whether credit was given to Hinduism or not, so long as the message of Vedanta reached everyone. On many occasions he said: Knock on every door. Tell everyone he is Divine.

Today parts of his message are carried in paperbacks that you can find in any bookstore—books by Aldous Huxley, Christopher Isherwood, Somerset Maugham, Teilhard de Chardin, and even Thomas Merton.

Thomas Merton, of course, constitutes a special threat to Christians, because he presents himself as a contemplative Christian monk, and his work has already affected the vitals of Roman Catholicism, its monasticism. Shortly before his death. Father Merton wrote an appreciative introduction to a new translation of the *Bhagavad Gita*, which is the spiritual manual or "Bible" of all Hindus, and one of the foundation blocks of monism or Advaita Vedanta. The *Gita*, it must be remembered, opposes almost every important teaching of Christianity. His book on the *Zen Masters*, published posthumously, is also noteworthy, because the entire work is based on a treacherous mistake: the assumption that all the so-called "mystical experiences" in every religion are true. He should have known better. The warnings against this are loud and clear, both in Holy Scripture and in the Holy Fathers.

Today I know of one Catholic monastery in California where cloistered monks are experimenting with Hindu religious practices. They were trained by an Indian who became a Catholic priest. Unless the ground had been prepared, I think this sort of thing couldn't be happening. But, after all, this was the purpose of Vivekananda's coming to the West: to prepare—the ground.

Vivekananda s message of Vedanta is simple enough. It looks like more than it is because of its trappings: some dazzling Sanskrit jargon, and a very intricate philosophical structure. The message is essentially this: All religions are true, but Vedanta is the ultimate truth. Differences are only a matter of "levels of truth." In Vivekananda's words: "Man is not travelling from error to truth, but climbing up from truth to truth, from truth that is lower to truth that is higher. The matter of today is the spirit of the future. The worm of today—the God of tomorrow." The Vedanta rests on this: that man is God. So it is for man to work out his own salvation. Vivekananda put it this way: "Who can help the Infinite? Even the hand that comes to you through the darkness will have to be your own."

Vivekananda was canny enough to know that straight Vedanta would be too much for Christians to follow, right off the bat. But "levels of truth" provided a nice bridge to perfect ecumenism—where there is no conflict because everyone is right. In the Swami's words: "If one religion be true, then all the others also must be true. Thus the Hindu faith is yours as much as mine. We Hindus do not merely tolerate, we unite ourselves with every religion, praying in the mosque of the Mohammedan, worshiping before the fire of the Zoroastrian, and kneeling to the cross of the Christian. We know that all religions alike, from the lowest fetishism to the highest absolutism, are but so many attempts of the human soul to grasp and realize the Infinite. So we gather all these flowers and, binding them together with the cords of love, make them into a wonderful bouquet of worship."

Still, all religions were only steps to the ultimate religion, which was Advaita Vedanta. He had a special contempt for Christianity, which at best was a "low truth"—a dualistic truth. In private conversation he said that only a coward would turn the other cheek. But whatever he said about other religions, he always returned to the necessity of Advaita Vedanta. "Art, science, and religion," he said, "are but three different ways of expressing a single truth. But in order to understand this we must have the theory of Advaita."

The appeal to today's youth is unmistakable. Vedanta declares the perfect freedom of every soul to be itself. It denies all distinction between sacred and secular: they are only different ways of expressing the single truth. And the sole purpose of religion is to provide for the needs of different temperaments: a god and a practice to suit everyone. In a word, religion is "doing your own thing."

All this may sound far-fetched; but Vivekananda did an effective job. Now I'll show how successful he was in introducing these Hindu ideas into Roman Catholicism, where his success has been the most striking.

Swami Vivekananda first came to America to represent Hinduism at the 1893 Parliament of Religions. 1968 was the 75th anniversary of this event, and at that time a Symposium of Religions was held under the auspices of the Vivekananda Vedanta Society of Chicago. Roman Catholicism was represented by a Dominican theologian from De Paul University, Father Robert Campbell. Swami Bhashyananda opened the meeting with the reading of good will messages from three very important people. The second was from an American Cardinal.

Father Campbell began the afternoon session with a talk on the conflict of the traditionalist versus the modernist in modern Catholicism. He said: "In my own university, surveys taken of Catholic student attitudes show a great swing towards the liberal views within the last five or six years. I know that the great Swami Vivekananda would himself be in favor of most of the trends in the direction of liberal Christianity." What Father Campbell apparently didn't know was that the modernistic doctrines he described were *not Christian at all*, they were pure and simple Vedanta.

So there will be no question of misinterpretation, I shall quote the Father's words on the modernists' interpretation of five issues, just as they appeared in three international journals: the *Prabuddha Bharat*a published in Calcutta, the *Vedanta Kesheri* published in Madras, and *Vedanta and the West*, published in London.

On doctrines: "Truth is a relative thing, these doctrines and dogmas (i.e., the nature of God, how man should live, and the after-life) are not fixed things, they change, and we are coming to the point where we deny some things that we formerly affirmed as sacred truths."

On God: "Jesus is divine, true, but any one of us can be divine. As a matter of fact, on many points, I think you will find the liberal Christian outlook is moving in the direction of the East in much of its philosophy both in its concept of an impersonal God and in the concept that we are all divine."

On Original Sin: "This concept is very offensive to liberal Christianity, which holds that man is perfectable by training and proper education."

On the world: "...The liberal affirms that it can be improved and that we should devote ourselves to building a more humane society instead of pining to go to heaven."

On other religions: "The liberal group says: Don't worry' about the old-fashioned things such as seeking converts, etc., but let us develop better relations with other religions."

So says Father Campbell for the modernistic Catholics. The modernist has been led like a child by the generous offer of higher truth, deeper philosophy and greater sublimity—which can be had by merely *subordinating the living Christ to modern man.*

Sifting through this shambles of modernistic thinking we find something rather interesting, yet entirely predictable. The whole traditional structure has been razed, but here and there pieces and parts have been reshaped and reused to build a religion in the image of natural man. It's grotesque, but it's growing more and more popular, because the modernist uses the same base as Communism, humanism, evolutionism—and the hero of evolutionism: *Teilhard de Chardin*. These religions of the perfectibility of natural man and the world all require one thing: *the annihilation of original sin*. If natural man is basically corrupt, there is no sense in talking about the perfectibility of man. And clearly, Utopia building will not be successful if man is basically corrupt. But remove this keystone and everything becomes possible. Remove original sin and Holy Scripture is either false or mythological or symbolical. The entire foundation of Christianity becomes a farce, especially the crucifixion of Christ for the sins of mankind. Then the humanists can speak of Jesus, the ethics teacher, and of the crucifixion as another example of man's inhumanity to man. Political ideologies can fight over the best way to make this world perfect. And Teilhard de Chardin can meditate on the spiritual evolution of man towards the Omega Point.

In effect, the modernist Catholics have sold their birthright for a mess of pottage. They look to a coming age of perfect man and perfect world. But if they were to look to the Holy Scripture they have just rejected, they might be appalled to discover that with their views they themselves are fulfilling prophecy from the second epistle of Saint Peter [2: 1-2]: *"... There shall be among you lying teachers, who shall bring in sects of perdition, and deny the Lord Who bought them; bringing upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their riotousness, through whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of."*

Here, then, we see the spectacular success of Hinduism, or Swami Vivekananda, or the power behind Vivekananda. It's made a clean sweep of Roman Catholicism. Her watchdogs have taken the thief as the friend of the master, and the house is made desolate before their eyes. The thief said: "Let us have interfaith understanding." and he was through the gate. And the expedient was so simple. The Christian Hindus (the Swamis) had only to recite the Vedanta philosophy using Christian terms. But the Hindu Christians (the modernistic Catholics), had to extrapolate their religion to include Hinduism. Then necessarily, truth became error, and error, truth. Alas, some would now drag the Orthodox Church into this desolate house. But let the modernists remember the words of Isaiah: *Woe unto them that call evil good and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness: that put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter! Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!* [Is. 5: 20-21.]

5. The Goal Of Hinduism: The Universal Religion

I WAS AMAZED to see the inroads that Hinduism had made during my absence from Christianity. It may seem odd that I discovered these changes all at once. This was because my guru held dominion over my every action and all this time I was, quite literally, "cloistered," even in the world. The Swami's severe injunctions kept me from reading any Christian books or speaking with Christians. For all their pretentious talk that all religions are true, the Swamis know that Christ is their nemesis. Above all, the Swami was afraid of the Holy Eucharist. So for twenty years I was totally immersed in the study of oriental philosophy and in the practice of its disciplines. I was ordered by my guru to get a degree in philosophy and anthropology, but these were only avocations that filled time between the important parts of my life: time with Swami and time with the teachings and practices of Vedanta.

Today I find Christianity locked in battle with its traditional enemies: the World, the Flesh and the Devil, all in modern dress. The World is not difficult to spot because it fights, to a large extent, under the banner of a well— known enemy: Communism. But for all its obviousness, the World has made

substantial gains. It has replaced real good with the seeming goods of humanism, social action, individual "creativity," rebellion, ugly art, folk masses, situational ethics and the like.

Given a little encouragement from the World and the Devil, the Flesh comes right along, operating very successfully on nothing more than natural man. It is, in effect, the enemy within. And it has won devastating victories: broken vows, "comfortable" discipline, immodesty and "sensitivity" training.

But it is the third enemy, the Devil, that is the most treacherous. It is the one that I finally recognized in Hinduism. It is subtle, and all but transparent. It manifests itself primarily in heresy and in confusion. But it has won victories in adjacent territories as well. It has introduced scientism into religion and discredited the Mysteries, upgrading their symbolism and downgrading their literal truth. It has given new glamor to self-will and personality culture. It attempts to replace old practices with new. But the real thrust of this Adversary is against Christian dogma. The real victory is heresy.

Swami Vivekananda's mission has been fulfilled in many particulars, but one piece is yet to be accomplished. This is the establishing of a Universal Religion. In this rests the ultimate victory of the Devil. Because the Universal Religion may not contain any "individualistic, sectarian" ideas, it will have nothing in common with Christianity, except in its semantics. The World and the Flesh may be fires in the stove and the chimney, but the Universal Religion will be a total conflagration of Christianity. The point of all this is that the Jesuit priest Teilhard de Chardin has already laid the foundation for a "" New Christianity," and it is *precisely to Swami Vivekananda's specifications for this Universal Religion.*

Teilhard de Chardin is an anomaly because, unlike traditional Roman theologians, he is highly appreciated by scholarly clergy who, in charity, I believe don't have any idea what he is talking about. Because Teilhard's ideas are to a great extent plagiarisms from Vedanta and Tantra gummed together with Christian-sounding jargon and heavily painted with evolutionism. It would be ludicrous if it weren't that he is taken so seriously. Even so, Teilhard vehemently denies the value of Hinduism. But denial or no, Vedanta and Tantra continue to weave crazily through the fabric of his thought. From what I can gather, he was enthralled by certain Indian ideas which are (within Hinduism) seriously and rather nicely worked out. But they become a confusion when Teilhard works them over.

Let me quote one example from him: '" The world I live in becomes divine. Yet these flames do not consume me, nor do these waters dissolve me; for, unlike the false forms of monism that impel us through passivity towards unconsciousness, the pan-Christism I am finding places union at the term of an arduous process of differentiation. I shall attain the spirit only by releasing completely and exhaustively all the powers of matter... I recognize that, following the example of the incarnate God revealed to me by the Catholic faith. I can be saved only by becoming one with the universe." This is out right Hinduism; actually, it is philosophy stew. It has a little bit of everything in it—a recognizable sloka from an Upanishad and pieces from several of the philosophical systems along with their practices. But if what he says may be amusing, the effect that he is having certainly is not.

In a press-conference given by Father Arrupe, General of the Society of Jesus, in June of 1965. Teilhard de Chardin was defended on the grounds that 'he was not a professional theologian and philosopher, so that it was possible for him to be unaware of all the philosophical and theological implications attached to some of his intuitions.' Then Father Arrupe praised him: 'Pere Teilhard is one of the great masters of contemporary thought, and his success is not to be wondered at. He carried through, in fact, a great attempt to reconcile the world of science with the world of faith.' The upshot of this reconciliation is a new religion. And in Teilhard s words: 'The new religion will be exactly the same as our old Christianity but with a new life drawn from the legitimate evolution of its dogmas as they come in contact with new ideas.' With this bit of background let us look at Vivekananda's Universal Religion and Teilhard's 'New Christianity.'

The Universal Religion as proposed by Vivekananda must have five characteristics. First, it must be scientific. It will be built on spiritual laws. Hence, it will be a true and scientific religion. "By Vedas," says Swami Vivekananda, "no books are meant. They mean the accumulated spiritual laws discovered by different persons in different times." This is the Vedantic *reconciliation of science and faith*. In effect, both Vivekananda and Teilhard use theoretical scientism as an article of their faith.

Second, its foundation is evolution. Swami Vivekananda says: 'Dvaita, Vishistadvaita and Advaita (i.e., dualism, qualified monism and

monism) are but three phases or stages in a single development (or evolution), of which the last-named constitutes the goal.' In Teilhard's words: 'A hitherto unknown form of religion—one that no one could yet have imagined or described, for lack of a universe large enough and organic enough to contain it—is burgeoning in men's hearts, from a seed sown by the idea of evolution.' And again: 'Original sin ... binds us hand and foot and drains the blood from us' because 'as it is now expressed, it represents a survival of static concepts that are an anachronism in our evolutionist system of thought.' Such a pseudoreligious concept of 'evolution,' which was consciously rejected by Christian thought, has been basic to Hindu thought for millenia. It is the sum and substance of karma, reincarnation and moksha (or the eventual attonement with the Divine), and every religious practice assumes it.

Third, the Universal Religion will not be built around any particular personality, but will be founded on eternal principles. Teilhard is well on his way towards the impersonal God when he writes: 'Christ is becoming more and more indispensable to me ... but at the same time the figure of the historical Christ is becoming less and less substantial and distinct to me.' "...My view of him is continually carrying him further and higher along the axis of (I hope!) orthodoxy.' Sad to say, this non-historical 'Christ' spirit is Hindu orthodoxy, not Christian.

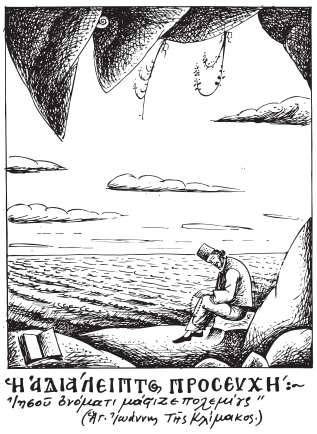
Fourth, the main purpose of the Universal Religion will be to satisfy the spiritual needs of men and women of diverse types. Individualistic, sectarian religions cannot offer this. Teilhard believed that Christianity did not fit everybody's religious aspirations. He records his discontent in these words: 'If Christianity has nothing to offer us but a pig in a poke, we'll soon end by jettisoning the whole thing, Christianity and all. A truth that has no immediate effective reaction on life, has no existence or validity.' And again: 'Christianity is still to some extent a refuge, but it does not embrace, or satisfy of even lead the 'modern soul' any longer.'

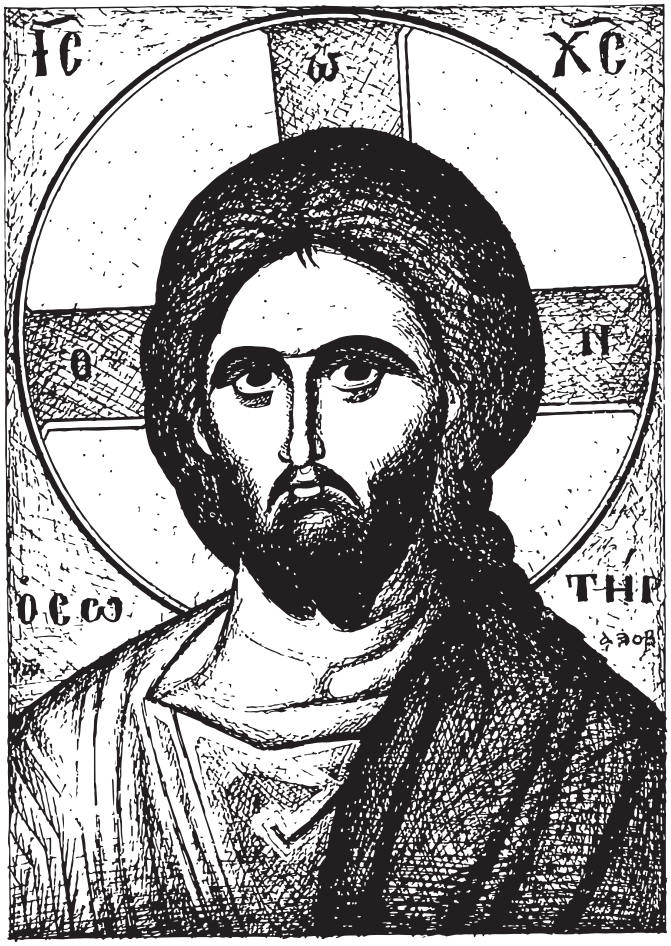
Fifth and final, within the Universal Religion (or New Christianity) we are all wending our way to the same destination. For Teilhard de Chardin it is the Omega Point, which belongs to something that is beyond representation. For Vivekananda it is the Om, the sacred syllable of the Hindus: 'All humanity, converging at the foot of that sacred place where is set the symbol that is no symbol, the name that is beyond all sound.'

Where will it end, this deformation of Christianity and triumph of Hinduism? Will we have the Om, or will we have the Omega?

Editor's note: *Let not the Orthodox reader indulge the wishful thought that all of this is the problem only of Roman Catholicism. Already the archecumenists of the Orthodox Church have begun to ape the Latin modernists in looking toward a universal religious synthesis. And do even those who are not yet so radical, who still wish only to unite with the rest of "Christianity," have any realization of the meaning and implications of a "Common Chalice" with those whose Christianity, as honest and concerned Roman Catholics themselves now admit, is in a process of radical decomposition under the influence of Hindu and other pagan ideas? Some of these implications, together with the Orthodox understanding of the "Omega Point" which ecumenism relentlessly pursues, will be examined in the conclusion to this series of articles.*

Next: Part III. A Fakir's "Miracle" And The Prayer Of Jesus.





More glorious is it to be
a prisoner for Christ's sake
than to be an **Apostle**,
than to be a **Teacher**,
than to be an **Evangelist.**

Saint John Chrysostom *In Eph. VIII*